THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IN
THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD BY

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TO

MY PRESENT CONGREGATION AT KIRKLISTON;
TO MY FORMER CONGREGATIONS AT FERINTOSH
AND MARYBURGH AND AT NORTH KNAPDALE;
AND TO THE PRESBYTERIES WITHIN WHOSE
BOUNDS THESE CONGREGATIONS ARE SITUATED
—IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF PLEASANT
AND PROFITABLE ASSOCIATIONS.

Foreword

A DISILLUSIONED world is in search of stability and progress. The form of this quest which is most publicly evident is material. Our peril is a social fabric without a soul, the attempt to realise social cohesion without recognising that it is the unseen universe which alone can establish a moral order in this world.

Nothing therefore can be of greater value to society in a period of world-wide distraction than to keep before it God's high purpose in its life. The realisation of that purpose in individual and corporate life is the Kingdom of God. It is a present experience and a future hope; individual, social, eternal.

Prophets had visions of it. Poets sang of it. But Christ sought to redeem ideas of the Kingdom, and also men for its social manifestation. And the world has yet to comprehend the actual, practical, economic value of redeemed lives, and of eternal hopes.

Dr. Macinnes has rendered an important service at this critical time in bringing into focus the place of the Kingdom of God in the Apostolic Writings. This he has done with great care and comprehension. He has read widely in preparation for his

work, and has faced the difficulties, as far as one can, without alienating the interest of the plain man by technicalities. Dr. Macinnes has made a faithful survey of the subject. One may, or may not, agree with him in some details of interpretation. But his emphasis is true to the records, and to the Apostolic consciousness, the centrality of Christ for the realisation of the Kingdom, the redeemed life and the redeemed society. A great eternal hope, bringing the power of that radiant hope to bear upon the needs of the present world. Dr. Macinnes does well to stress the need for the expression of a united Christian social conscience in our time. For the lack of it means a paralysing reaction upon the Church and the individual. When the Church can unitedly express a unified outworking of Christian life into social facts, there will come from that attitude a reaction of inspiration and clearer vision. The Church needs more and more to be redeemed from self-consciousness, to become Christ-conscious, and conscious of the coming of the Kingdom. It is then she will rise above the discouragement of disillusioned egotism.

John Douglas Adam.

Preface

This volume, in its original form, was a Thesis submitted to the University of Edinburgh; for it that University conferred on the writer the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of New Testament Language, Literature and Criticism.

The Thesis now appears with little alteration; the only changes made are in the way of arrangement and in simplification. But it is not a thesis for philosophers; it is rather a humble contribution for the help of those intelligently and actively engaged in seeking to lift their fellow men to higher moral and spiritual levels with the aid of the teaching of the Divine Library called the Bible. The writer's aim has been to suggest what in his view are the solutions offered by the Apostolic Writings of problems—doctrinal, social, industrial, political, national and international—at present occupying the minds of Christian people everywhere.

The greatest philosopher of the Ancient World used a memorable parable to illustrate the condition of the unwise in this world of Sense in their relation to the higher or spiritual world. He depicted them as living in a cave which had its aperture directed towards the light of the Sun; they have their backs

to the light, however, and their sole illuminant is a fire which is burning behind them. Whatever moves throws its shadow on the wall or floor in front of them, and consequently their only experience is that which they acquire in looking at things which are mere shadows and in hearing sounds which are only echoes. Those of them, however, who have turned round to the Sun-light have been liberated and have ascended to the higher ground. The ignorant and the thoughtless continue to dwell in darkness or in a dim light; but those who have learned wisdom leave the cave and dwell in the knowledge of what is good.

This illustration is as apt to-day as it was some centuries before the Christian era. Multitudes, as far as the higher things of the soul are concerned, are mere cave-dwellers—pleasure-seekers, money-grabbers, self-worshippers. They are in bondage, with their faces turned away from the light of the Knowledge of God, living among shadows and deceptions. Through the eye of the intellect, philosophy could see vaguely the ideal world, but it was unable to understand what it was that prevented that world from perfectly expressing itself. It was only to the few that it held out diffidently the hope of attaining to the highest form of human existence, when the soul in an absorbing ecstasy lost consciousness of itself through its apprehension of God. Christianity, on the other hand, has *revealed* the ideal world or the Kingdom of God; and everyone,

without exception, who is willing to turn to its light, can see what is hindering the realisation of the Kingdom and help to have the hindrances removed. If in any small measure this book will prove of aid to the would-be emancipators of these cave-dwellers, the purpose of its publication will have been fulfilled.

The author acknowledges with gratitude his indebtedness to many sources of information which he is unable specifically to mention—the principal authorities consulted are referred to in the course of the narrative. But he would very particularly express his deep sense of obligation to Dr. Douglas Adam, of London, and formerly Professor in Columbia University, New York, for reading the manuscript and writing the Foreword; and to Professor H. A. A. Kennedy, D.D., D.Sc., of New College, and Professor Curtis, D.D., D.Litt., of the University of Edinburgh for hints and guidance in connection with the research work which resulted in the writing of this book.

Alex. M. F. Macinnes.

Kirkliston,
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Introduction

In the third decade of the Christian era Jesus of Nazareth came forward in Judea preaching: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17), and afterwards in Galilee saying: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark i. 15).

No definition was given of the Kingdom of God for none was required. "The people's phrase became the master's theme." In fact, the chief object on the religious and political Jewish horizon in the time of Christ was the "Kingdom of God." Hence it was natural that He should use the phrase to enable Him to get into contact with the popular mind. It was also appropriate that He should make the idea central in His teaching while freeing it from all political limitations. The "Kingdom" conception with its Jewish realism of a by-gone age is unacceptable to the modern mind, but Jesus so transmuted it by His insistence on Ethical conditions for life Godward and manward as to render the idea of permanent and universal worth.

The two quotations given in the opening paragraph show that the term had a varied form. The varied form continued in the teaching of Jesus, as recorded in our earliest sources, Q and Mark, from the opening of His public ministry to His

last interview with His disciples (Mark. xiv. 25). The expression "the gospel of the Kingdom"—indicates how important the Kingdom was in the estimation of Jesus, and the variation in the form of the phrase is also not without its significance. Jesus is supposed to have used both forms of the phrase. The form—"the Kingdom of Heaven" may have been due to the fact that the Jews in their fear of taking the name of God in vain were reluctant to use the Divine name and substituted "heaven" for "God." This tendency we see illustrated in the "Pirque Abhoth" (Sayings of the Fathers) and in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and in modern speech in such expressions as "heaven bless you" and "heaven forbid." But in this form the term was discontinued once Christianity came into touch with the Gentile world, probably because it was felt to be unsuitable to a Greek audience to whom heaven meant Olympus.

A feature of the New Testament, which cannot fail to strike the careful reader, is the fact that while the expression "the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of Heaven" occurs frequently in the Synoptics—not less than one hundred and eleven times—one meets with it but seldom in the other books of the Apostolic writings. It occurs in the Fourth Gospel only in two passages (iii. 3, 5 and xviii. 16), in Acts eight times, in the Pauline Epistles fourteen times, in the other Epistles four times, and in Revelation only twice.

This is a literary phenomenon which calls for explanation. A change has taken place, as we have seen, but the change is more apparent than real; for the "Kingdom" remains and is only differently

expressed as the intellectual outlook of the hearer or the political situation of the preacher of "the gospel of the Kingdom" changes. For, while the "Kingdom of God" was intelligible to the Jewish people with their theocratic ideas and Messianic hope, the thought implied was better understood by the Gentiles when expressed by such terms as "Salvation" and "Eternal life." Further, in those days of frequent revolts against the Roman Empire it was felt to be inadvisable, on the part of the followers of Christ, to use language, publicly, that might awaken the suspicions or provoke the ire of Roman officials as the "Kingdom" phraseology was bound to do (cf. Acts xvii. 7). Hence the marked waning of emphasis on the term "Kingdom of God." But in the twentieth century the expression is revived and is both popular and prominent—never more so since the Apostolic Age. This may be due to more than one reason. The name "Church," which was meant to express brotherhood, suggests to many, not warm social relationships, but cliques and coteries. Hence, on the rediscovery of Christianity as a social force in the world, by way of reaction from organised religion as represented by the Churches, the phrase "Kingdom of God" has again been adopted with enthusiasm. There is, probably, another fact whose influence has been felt in this matter. Science, commerce and travel have done much in the way of drawing the ends of the earth and the nations of the world closer together, and the possibility of one Kingdom or Family of God is seen more clearly to-day than at any other time in the history of Christianity since the beginning of our era. It is

remarkable that at a time when republics are more than in the air and the terms " King " and " Kingdom " are unpopular in the sphere of politics, these categories should be so much in evidence in the region of religion and morality in reference to Christ and His dominion. The fact would seem to indicate the existence of a strong sentiment in favour of the establishment of His universal sway and His becoming the sole King of men. Indeed, in widely separated places throughout the world, the conviction is growing that there is no possible outlet for the world's present difficulties except in recasting the Social Order upon the ethics and principles of Jesus Christ. Instead of looking forward to the millenium as a shadowy state of perfection which humanity may possibly reach in the remote future, it is being seriously stated that, if the Kingdom of God cannot be established on the Earth here and now, there will be no future for humanity.

PART I

Sources and Background

CHAPTER I

The Apostolic Writings As Sources

THE Apostolic writings are understood to be the books of the New Testament, for these have been composed either by Apostles of our Lord or by those influenced by them. Our Saviour does not commit His teaching to writing. His disciples did that. So that even the Gospels which contain that teaching, though not all written by Apostles, came to be described as Apostolic writings. Justin Martyr, for example, refers to them as "the Apostolic Memoirs which are called Gospels."

As they are at present arranged, the Apostolic writings are divided into three distinct classes. The first group includes the historical books—the Gospels and Acts; the second, the Epistles; while the third group contains but one book known as the Apocalypse or Revelation. The general arrangement is clearly according to subject-matter, not according to date of authorship.

Throughout the Apostolic writings there moves one central figure—Jesus Christ. His personality and mission in the world are their primary concern. The writings do not belong to different schools in the sense of which we speak of different schools of philosophy. They belong to one school, that of Christ. At the feet of the great Common Master

the writers all learned the truth, and, though they wrote it under varied guise, according to circumstances, their labours were harmonious and the result a glorious unity.

In these days people are much interested in sources. It is felt that it is only when the genesis and earliest unfolding of an idea or institution or literature has been traced that it can be really understood and appreciated. Acquaintance with the origin and history of a book is necessary to its proper interpretation. It is, therefore, fortunate that discovery and research have thrown so much light upon the origin of the books of the New Testament and enable us to follow the different stages in their growth into a canon. Our ability to do so does, in a thoughtful mind, not obscure but rather reveal the more clearly their divine derivation and authority.

The writers of these books or tracts did not meet in solemn conclave, like the members of the Westminster Assembly, to draw up the Confession of Faith and cognate documents, knowing that they were engaged on work which was to be of permanent benefit to the Church. They acted separately though unitedly under the guidance of God's providence and Christ's Spirit and did exactly what the needs of the different Christian communities demanded at the time, not knowing that their writings were to be collected into a canon and thus preserved for thousands of years as the supreme standard of the Church. Thus they wrote to meet the needs of their own time and left themselves to the guidance of the Divine Spirit, and their writings became applicable to every age ; they do not become

antiquated nor do they require revision like Confessions and Creeds.

As long as the early Christian Church was confined to Palestine and a large company of disciples who had seen and heard the Christ lived to tell by word of mouth the story of His life and teachings, there was no desire for a written record. Even to the time of Papias there was a preference for the oral tradition. "For I did not suppose," said Papias, "I should profit so much by books as by the living and abiding voice." But when the spoken gospel had been preached among the Gentiles and the Church had lengthened its cords and many of those outside the bounds of Judaism and Palestine had been received into the Christian Community, there arose the need for a written account of Jesus. This need was emphatically felt when the number of the eye and ear-witnesses of Jesus was rapidly diminishing. Many Christians there were who had never visited Palestine and had only heard the barest facts from the lips of the Apostles regarding the life of Christ. These needed detailed records of "the things of Christ." Thus the Gospels came to be written. The time had passed when several persons were available who could say: "Thus and thus did we hear the Lord speak and see the Lord act." As long as there were such witnesses, what was written, as is indicated by Papias' statement, was not so much appreciated as the oral teaching; for, as yet, there was no Apostolic writing canonised. Any writing there was, though undoubtedly valued, had not the authority which it commanded once it was put in the canon.

Though the oral tradition was sufficient for a

considerable time to remember incidents, disconnected teachings could not be easily preserved in the memory. Hence it is held by most competent critics that a collection of the sayings of Jesus was made in His life-time and that this work was done by Matthew, the Apostle, who, as a government official, was likely to know some form of shorthand. These Sayings or Logia were originally in Aramaic and afterwards translated into Greek. This was the earliest of the Apostolic writings and formed the basis of the First Gospel and was also largely used by Luke. Among New Testament scholars it is known as Q (Quelle). It is supposed to have been in circulation in the Christian Community from the very beginning and to have come into the hands of St. Paul after his conversion in 31 A.D. (Burton on Galatians.) To it, no doubt, Papias refers in the words quoted by Eusebius : " Matthew accordingly composed the oracles in the Hebrew (Aramaic) dialect and each one interpreted them as he was able " (H.E. iii. 39). The work was translated into Greek and was used as a preacher's manual at an early stage. The preachers would have added to it from the oral tradition, and it is easy to understand how different copies of the manual, falling into the hands of the authors of the First and Third Gospels might account for the slight variations with which Q is embodied in these books. Recently Dr. Rendel Harris has tried to identify the " oracles " with the Book of Testimonies against the Jews used by Justin, Cyprian and Gregory of Nyssa and others. The attempt has failed. As Professor Bacon says : " This is one of the cases in which we are compelled to believe that the romantic interest

of Dr. Harris' interpretation of his data far outstrips its validity."

Mark is generally recognised as the earliest of the Gospels, for Q, though circulating as a unit, was not regarded as a Gospel. It is supposed to have been written for the Gentiles and Jewish Christians at Rome. It contains the story of Christ as narrated by St. Peter. The Sayings are not included as they are already in circulation, but some scholars profess to find traces of them in this Gospel also. The Logia and Mark are the main sources for Matthew and Luke. The whole of Mark, with the exception of a few verses, is absorbed. The Sayings appear in Matthew in a slightly less original form than in Luke, Matthew indicating reflection, judgment and characteristic generalisation. Both Gospels have also other sources that they draw from, as indicated, for example, the Story of the Birth of Christ and the Travel Narrative in Luke.

In Mark we have a vivid picture of Christ, mighty in deed, introducing the New Dispensation. The book is mainly historical and calculated to keep the image of Jesus from fading with the flight of years, seeing He is not returning to the earth as was generally expected in the Primitive Church. This Gospel was so valued that it was used almost entirely by Matthew and Luke in the composition of their Gospels which are much fuller and, for special reasons, include several facts omitted in the earliest Gospel.

Matthew presents to us Jesus as the Messiah promised to the Jews, who should set up the perfect Kingdom of God. To prove this it makes extensive use of the Old Testament from which passages are

quoted for illustration as much as for indicating the fulfilment of the Messianic prediction; for everything ideal in the Jewish Scriptures was regarded as having a connection with the Messianic age. In fact, this Gospel may be looked upon as a final appeal to the Jewish people. To use the words of Godet, it was "the ultimatum of God to His ancient people—recognise Jesus as your Messiah or accept Him as your Judge." The inmost idea of the Gospel may be expressed in the words: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." "I am come not to destroy but to fulfil."

The Third Gospel, which was composed by St. Luke, the associate of St. Paul, about 60 A.D. (according to Harnack in his latest work on the Origin of Christianity), contains the primitive view of Christ and the Kingdom, but also a great deal more; the Kingdom to him is the transformation of the present order of the world, not absolutely its supersession. For this Luke seems to prepare by the Story of the Childhood of Jesus which, according to Dr. Sanday and others of the foremost scholars of this century has upon it "the signs of good tradition." The outlook of the story is that of Judaism before the Gospel was preached among the Gentiles; and it is difficult to understand how the narrative could have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem when the old order had changed. There is no reason for suggesting, as do Dr. Box and others, that the hymns and the rest of the story are anything other than what they claim to be; and, as Professor A. Nairne says in "The Faith of the New Testament," "whatever the process of its composition, it interprets to us almost

as primitive a conception of the beginning of the Gospel as could be." To Luke Jesus is the Elder Brother of a great Brotherhood, as wide as humanity, in which the Kingdom of God is to find an embodiment. Hence the peculiarity or rather the fulness of his genealogy of Jesus. But it is possible there may have been another or a further reason for the insertion of the Narrative of the Miraculous Birth of Jesus both in Matthew and Luke. The facts as to the birth of Jesus were inscrutable in reference to the relation between God and man. The facts were not unknown to the Church, but there was no need felt, at first, for engrossing the story in the narrative. The Baptism takes the place, in the second Gospel, which the Miraculous Birth takes in the First and Third. Mark says nothing of the Birth. The testimony at the Baptism serves the same end. The omission of the Birth throws the greater emphasis on the Baptism. It is true the Baptism is mentioned in the other two Synoptics but it is over-shadowed by the other events, whereas, in Mark, it stands significantly forward. To Mark the Baptism has the same fundamental importance for the Divine Sonship of the Man Jesus as the Supernatural Birth in the First and Third evangelists, and that this was the view of the Early Church is indicated by Justin, who speaks of the Baptism of Jesus and its accompaniments as implying for Jesus a Birth-day as God's Son. Why then is the story of the miraculous birth told by Matthew and Luke ?

The Marcan Memoir may have been in circulation any time from 44 to 60 A.D. In it there is no reference to this fact. By the time the earliest Gospel was written and read the bitterness of

the Jews towards the Christian faith had grown most intense, and there is reason to believe that already the facts behind the words of Luke regarding the Virgin—"But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (ii. 19)—were being distorted by the evil-minded and by the enemies of Christ. Scandals were raised and it may be that St. Paul has met them for the first time on the lips of the sorcerer at Paphos. Something, undoubtedly, was said in St. Paul's hearing, to turn the proconsul aside from the Christian faith, that roused in him red-hot indignation (Acts xiii. 8-11). The villainy of the sorcerer's type of mind afterwards produced the anti-Christian legend which represented the father of the Saviour as a Roman soldier so as to connect Jesus in the Jewish mind with what it hated most—Rome and the soldiery.

Some such reason stronger than that just mentioned in connection with the story in Luke seems to have arisen, to cause the insertion of the Miraculous Birth in the First and Third Gospels; and in this connection the words of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians—"made of a woman"—and those in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel on the Logos being "made flesh," are most significant. The whole story is interesting and important, from our point of view, because of the view of the Kingdom of God running through this part of the Record.

When we pass from the first three Gospels, known as the Synoptics, to the Gospel according to St. John, we find ourselves on a different elevation and in a rare atmosphere. From the side of the Sea of Galilee we feel transported, as it were, to a Mount of Transfiguration. To quote the words of

Professor James A. Robertson, we seem to "pass from a pastoral landscape, open, sunny, windswept, into the enchantment of a tropical forest with its strange luxurious growth. The more human, natural and familiar air of the Synoptics has been displaced by a subtle all-pervading sense of the supernatural." ("The Gospel and the Epistles," p. 42.)

The aim of the Fourth Gospel is not simply the giving of historical facts and teachings, but that those reading it "may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (xx. 31). The motive behind it is apologetic and evangelical rather than merely historical.

This Gospel resembles the Synoptics in that it assumes the form of narrative, but the principal elements are the discourses which have an undoubted historic basis. In fact, in some very important historical particulars this Gospel supplants the earlier ones. But the Gospel is timeless, written from the point of view of the Church's experience of the Risen Lord, and is more an interpretation than a history. It can, therefore, be used as a source for the teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom and also for the Apostolic interpretation of that teaching.

Tradition assigns the authorship of the Fourth Gospel to John the Apostle, and this view is adopted to-day by the ablest of scholars and that after the most searching and earnest study of the Johannine problem—a problem which for some years back has been one of the most absorbing problems of New Testament criticism.

Irenæus, who calls the Fourth Gospel "the Divine Bread or Word of Life for men," was a

disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of John. In a letter he gives a vivid picture of his hearing from the lips of Polycarp the things that he used to hear John say—utterances which agreed with the words of the Gospel. Clement of Alexandria gives an account of the composition of the Four Gospels, "received from the oldest presbyters, men whose recollection would go back practically to the days of the Apostles. John last, having observed that the flesh and blood (somatic) facts had been set forth in the gospels, on the exhortation of his companion, inspired by the Spirit, produced a Spiritual Gospel." In the language of Alexandria of that day "spiritual" signifies allegorical. This accords with what we find in the Gospel.

This Gospel may be regarded as the work of the Apostle, written in Ephesus where he died in old age. The Gospel, in its present form, may have received touches from one or more of the circle of disciples who waited upon John in Ephesus, but there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the tradition that attributes the authorship to the Son of Zebedee. The one solitary voice from antiquity that was heeded and is still heeded by some—strangely the echo of it meets us in Dr. Charles' recent great commentary on Revelation—to controvert the tradition of the Apostolic authorship, is a fragment from an unreliable historian of the fifth century, claiming to be a statement, on the the authority of Papias, to the effect that "John the divine (theologos) and his brother James were done away with by the Jews." Harnack points out that it is impossible for this statement to have come from the second century and to have escaped the notice

of Irenæus and others. The Jews did not kill James—Herod did—and it is certain that John did not suffer with James. Dr. Armitage Robinson, in " The Historical Character of St. John's Gospel," concludes that there is " no reason to cast doubt on the tradition that John the Apostle died at Ephesus in old age."

Acts is a continuation of the Third Gospel and is the work of Luke. Of this there is now no doubt on the part of the ablest of New Testament critics, who also regard the history all through as thoroughly trustworthy. Harnack in his latest work holds that Acts was composed by Luke in 62 A.D. He points out that if Luke wrote in the years 80 or 90 in the manner he did, and Paul had been crowned with martrydom on the occasion of the first imprisonment, he would have been not " simply a blundering, but an absolutely incomprehensible historian." Paul was acquitted at the first trial or his accusers failed to put in an appearance in time in Rome. The Apostle thereafter revisited the Asiatic Churches and wrote the Pastoral Epistles, the last of them during a later imprisonment. There is no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, though the guilt of the Jews for rejecting Christ is dwelt upon, so that the evidence for the early date of the composition of the book is conclusive. The results arrived at by Harnack, after fifteen years study of the subject, indicate a revolt, part of a great movement in New Testament criticism, to sanity and faith.

Acts is of the greatest value to us in our study of the Kingdom of God ; for Luke, as an historian, is acquainted with all the cross-currents of his time,

and to him everything in history is the expression of the Spirit. The Spirit of God works through history, and its action causes the rise and growth of the Church which is made to embrace the Gentiles, not by the inspiration of Peter or Paul, but as "the result of tendencies in the new religion itself, manifesting themselves in obscure personages of the drama" (Harnack). The plan of Acts is to show how the Spirit of Jesus, working in the Apostles, founded the Primitive Christian Community, bringing the Kingdom of God into visibility, called the mission to the Gentiles into being, and conducted the Gospel of the Kingdom from Jerusalem to Rome, the centre of the Empire, setting the Gentile world in the place of the Jewish nation that had hardened itself against the appeal of Christianity.

The second group of the Apostolic writings consists of the Epistles. These letters were written by Apostles of Christ, some to particular bodies of Christians, while others—the general epistles—were composed for the benefit of all Christians. The epistles took the place of personal Apostolic visits, and dealt with special questions or circumstances that required the guidance of the Apostles. The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, his earliest writing, for example, came into existence through the fact that the enthusiasm of the Galatians for him and his message had gradually cooled and that this Christian community was being led astray by teachers from Jerusalem who impugned Paul's Apostolic authority and personal character and insisted that all Christians ought to observe the law and be circumcised. His Epistles to the Thessalonians,

which were penned soon after, were the outcome of the Apostle's intense desire to encourage those brave Christians in the time of persecution and perplexity, and that when he was not in a position to pay a personal visit to them. So with the rest of the thirteen epistles that bear his name. All these Epistles are now recognised as authentic, for even the Pastoral Epistles, so long the storm centre of literary criticism, are accepted by so advanced a critic as Harnack, in his latest work, as Pauline and not epistles merely containing Pauline materials.

Saints James, Peter, John and Jude were moved in the same way to write the Epistles which bear their names. There is still a considerable difference of opinion among critics as to the Epistle of James—some holding that it was not written by James, the Apostle, and President of the Church in Jerusalem, but is of later date ; others that it was composed by him and is, perhaps, the earliest of all the Epistles. Its teaching, on the whole, is primitive and such as might well have come from the pen of James, the brother of our Lord. The Second Epistle of Peter makes use of the Epistle of Jude and purports to be by the Apostle Peter. Its teaching is Apostolic and professes to be that of St. Peter. As such it is regarded here, whoever the final editor may have been who gave it its present form. The Epistle to the Hebrews, probably composed by the learned Apollos, is somewhat different from the letters which have been referred to ; it is a combination of argument, doctrine and exhortation. The aim is apologetic as well as practical. The author follows a carefully elaborated plan and submits a cumulative argument, proving that Christ is superior to all

other teachers of the race and is the perfect Mediator of Salvation or the actual founder of the New Dispensation.

These epistolary Apostolic writings, written, as they were, under such circumstances and conditions as have been indicated, can only be expected to deal with such aspects of the Kingdom of God as are suggested by the situations with which they are connected. Paul, for instance, meeting with the self-righteousness of the Pharisees, presents salvation and the blessings of the Kingdom of God as a gift of righteousness, while the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews does this under the figure of a covenant, because he is writing to the Jews who are inclined to cling to the ordinances of the Old Dispensation. Peter, again, to encourage brethren under persecution, enlarges on the privileges and hopes of Christians as the spiritual people of God and heirs of the Kingdom ; while John, on the other hand, because of the circumstances of his environment at Ephesus, describes as Life what the Synoptics speak of as the Kingdom of God.

The influences that produced the single example of the third type of New Testament literature—the Apocalypse—were rather more complex. The so-called Apocalyptic type of literature was a characteristic product of late Judaism. The Book of Daniel is the earliest and most familiar example.

The apocalyptic writers for two centuries or more immediately preceding the birth of Christ devoted themselves largely to setting forth, in glowing imagery, the Kingdom of the Messiah as they conceived it would be. They made the Book of Daniel, with its symbolic representation of men

and nations, their model. Their work was very popular and the pictures they drew of the future were in many minds and the words they wrote were on many tongues. So much so that Jesus and His Apostles regarded them as a suitable medium for conveying the truth on the subject of the Kingdom of God to their hearers. This is evident from the eschatological discourses or descriptions in the teaching of our Lord and of His Apostles.

As there stands one great outstanding work of the apocalyptic type of literature in the Old Testament—the Book of Daniel—so there is in the New Testament the Book of Revelation, of whose right to a place in the canon there is no doubt, because of the belief that it was composed in the Apostolic circle, and inasmuch as its teaching is of a very lofty kind and essentially in harmony with the mind of Christ. It is a very interesting and important source for the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, provided it is borne in mind that apocalyptic books as a rule—and Revelation is not an exception —expressed the beliefs of their age as to what was actually to happen in the future, and that great caution be exercised in drawing doctrinal inferences from such pictures and poetry as we find in the Apocalypse.

As to when and how this Christian Apocalypse arose there is a theory that has a great attraction. It is to the effect that when Jerusalem was threatened with destruction at the hands of Rome, the rebel party getting the upper hand in November 66, A.D., there was a general exodus of those who could not, in conscience, join the rebels. The Christians, with John, the Apostle, at their head were among them.

Eusebius tells that they fled "in consequence of a divine admonition" and that the place they went to was Pella—a place closely associated in their memory with Jesus. The words of Jesus regarding the fate of Jerusalem and the Parousia were ringing in their ears. His discourse known as the "Little Apocalypse" was in their hands. The national catastrophe and the Second Coming of the Lord excited these people greatly. Probably both these events were expected to come together, and to Pella the fugitives went as the place where they hoped the Lord would appear to them. On the authority of the Apocalypse of Jesus they left Jerusalem, and under the excitement of Apocalyptic hopes they tarried for a time at Pella; and it is to this Johannine circle, so interested in Apocalyptic, that the Book of Revelation is ascribed in its original shape. But it may have received its present form in the time of Domitian and been touched up by more than one editor. The circumstances were extremely exciting and conducive to the production of such literature. Of that time Tacitus in his "Annals" writes: "I start upon a narrative teeming with disasters, terrible with wars, discordant with seditions, violent in the intervals of peace. Three civil wars, more abroad . . . the Parthians nearly taking up arms because they were illuded by the appearance of a Pretender Nero . . . the sea full of exiles, barren rocks defiled with murders . . . no worse disasters to the Roman people, no more unmistakable evidence ever proved that our imperial continuance is not the care of heaven—retribution for our sins." Hence Sanday wrote "Can we not conceive the Apocalypse rising out of

the whirling chaos of the years A.D. 68-69 when the solid fabric of the Empire may well have seemed to be really breaking up more easily than at any other period ? " Yes, we can.

Recently two great works have been written on the Book of Revelation by the eminent scholars, Drs. Peake and Charles. Many dark points are cleared up, but there yet remain some questions to be answered. Charles is confident that Revelation was not written by the Apostle John, but by a prophet of that name who migrated from Galilee late in life and went to Ephesus, and that the linguistic agreements with the Johannine writings can be accounted for by the fact that the Apocalypse came from the same circle of Christian disciples as they. But the contention of this distinguished critic and commentator is greatly weakened by his acceptance of the tradition that the Apostle John suffered martyrdom long before the destruction of Jerusalem—a tradition which has no reliable historical basis. Peake is undecided on the question of the authorship of Revelation (p. 69).

The latest criticism regards the Book as belonging, as it stands, to the time of Domitian, as being a unit and the work of one author who was accustomed to think in Aramaic, whose knowledge of Greek was defective, and who used several sources, like Shakespeare in the composition of his plays, some in Greek and some in Aramaic. The Epistles were written by the author before the general persecution which the Book has in view, and, at the time of the writing of the Book, were worked in. The author died before the work was finished and an editor misplaced certain parts and added others,

causing a slight discord on the surface of a deep, underlying harmony.

The immediate historical background of the Apocalypse is the bitter struggle between Christianity and heathenism. Rome has become "drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (xvii. 6). The contest centres about the worship of the "beast," that is the Emperor, and the aim of the Jewish Christian—either John the Apostle or some other John of this Apostolic circle—is to encourage his readers by glowing pictures of the coming victory of the Lamb, and to thus steel them for unfaltering resistance to the assault of heathenism. The motive is the same as that of Paul, when he wrote to the persecuted Thessalonians, though the form in which the purpose is realised is fundamentally different. The Book, in fact, is "a tract for hard times," a vision of hope which has a fresh application for every age.

The motives which originally led certain Christians to write the four Gospels induced the Church to regard these books as the most authentic and, therefore, authoritative records of the life and teaching of our Lord. The process of canonisation was gradual. The fact that three of the Gospels were associated with the names of Apostles and the other with Luke, the faithful companion of Paul, undoubtedly tended to establish their authority. But the chief canonising influence was the need for such records, in view of the great Gnostic heresies. There is no doubt that it was the pressure of Gnosticism that led to the formulation of the Canon of the New Testament, a process which was due to the conviction of the Church that it possessed, at

least in the four Gospels, and the Epistles of St. Paul, a body of authoritative Christian documents of equal validity with the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

The production of spurious Gospels, like that of Marcion in the second century, written to furnish a literary basis for certain heretical doctrines, and the desire of the Church Fathers to have records to which they could appeal as authorities, helped to hasten the formation of a New Testament Canon. The use of the Gospels in the services of the Church probably began before the end of the first century and thus, by degrees, they came to have equal authority to that of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Further, the natural desire to supplement the teachings of Jesus by those of the Apostles led the Church to single out certain of the many epistles which existed in the Christian community, and associate them with the Gospels. Already, in the first century, the Apostolic Epistles and traditions were cherished by the individual Churches to which the Epistles had been at first directed. In time, the need for a written record of the Apostolic teachings and work became largely felt. Hence by the end of the second century, Acts, the thirteen Epistles of Paul, 1st Peter, 1st John and the Apocalypse (chosen out of a number of apocalypses written by early Christians) were by common consent placed side by side with the Gospels. Regarding the remaining groups of the New Testament, opinion remained undecided for a considerable time, and the final decision was the result of an open and prolonged yet quiet consideration of the merits of each book and its claim to Apostolic authority. Testing these works in the laboratory of experience the Christian Church

separated the twenty-seven books of the New Testament from numerous kindred writings and put them in the Canon. Time and later consideration have fully approved the selection.

Professor Turner, of Oxford, says: "Historically you cannot draw an arbitrary line between the Apostolic and the sub-Apostolic ages, between the literature that was collected into the New Testament and the literature of the succeeding age." Professor Moffatt, in criticising this statement remarks: "True, but all depends on what is meant by 'arbitrary.'" Dr. Philip Schaff's opinion—and it is endorsed by Professor H. A. A. Kennedy—is, that there is a chasm between the literature of the New Testament and that of the next century, "sheer, deep and abysmal." Dr. Gwatkin, in his "Early Church History," draws a clear and wide distinction between the two literatures of the two ages and argues from this distinction to the uniqueness of the Apostolic Writings. Dr. Griffith Thomas holds that the distinction between the two ages is that between the spirit of Inspiration in the New Testament and the spirit of Illumination in the second and subsequent centuries, and that this is the reason why the Apostolic writings have been regarded by the Church as unique, and that in this fact of difference their authority lies.

Though we may not agree with Julicher's conclusions as a whole in his Introduction to the New Testament, his account of the history of the Canon can command general approbation. "The various writings fell imperceptibly into their place as being records of the life and teaching of Jesus and the application of that teaching by men who lived near

enough to Him to have unequalled grasp of its essentials. Next, these writings came to be regarded as 'inspired of God' because they were 'profitable,' because of the experience of the Christian community in applying them to the conscience of men. Books whose words were found to awake the instinct of righteousness and clean living in the souls of hard and dissolute heathen, were felt to be divine." And these are the reasons that appeal to us to-day. We do not accept the Canon of the Apostolic writings because it was fixed by some Synod of Christians two or more centuries after Christ. We believe in the New Testament because it represents Jesus Christ, and because His teaching and its interpretation, as therein recorded, appeal to us as nothing else does in all the literature of the world.

CHAPTER II

The Background of the Apostolic Writings.

To understand the teaching of the Apostolic Writings on the Kingdom of God it is necessary to study it against the background of Jewish literature—canonical and non-canonical.

The origin of the idea of the Kingdom of God, if not the term itself, may be traced to the covenant made by God with Israel who were to become "a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. xix. 5-6). But it may be more correct to say that the historic idea dates from David from whom Christ descended according to the flesh. The ideal, in a less marked form, appears as far back as the proto-evangelium in which occurs the first promise to man of the victory of good over evil (Gen. iii. 15) and continues throughout the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments as an underlying thought. The presentation of it in the last book of the New Testament has practically the same garb as it has in Exodus, the Kingdom of God in its final shape being represented as a "Kingdom of priests" (Rev. v. 10; xx. 6).

The Kingdom of God "is the fellowship of men with God and with one another in love" (A. B. Davidson); and the Scriptures describe God's great operation of establishing the "Kingdom" or of bringing men into fellowship with Himself and with one another in love. It is clear

from these writings—which it must be remembered are not the revelation of God so much as an account of that revelation—that the Divine operation referred to had great turning points as at the Divine Call of, and promise to, Abraham (Gen. xii. 1-3); at the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt when "a nation was born in a day," for the service of God and humanity; at the Exile when the experience of great suffering prepared the way for the element of vicarious sacrifice in connection with the establishment of the Kingdom; and, especially, at the Incarnation of Christ or the Messiah when the cause of the Kingdom or "the fellowship of men with God and one with another in love" received an infinite impulse which we might call a new start in the spiritual and upward career of man. Then the ideal, before so dim and distant, became real and practical in a way and measure never deemed possible within the limitations of time and space.

It is not correct to say that the Old Testament Dispensation was only a preparation or adumbration of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom was there, though, owing to the circumstances of the times, it was but partially presented and very imperfectly realised. The operation of God for the Redemption of Mankind was in progress, seeking by Providence and the Divine Spirit and all the gifts and graces that flowed therefrom to bring men and creation perfectly under the Divine sway; and there seems to be no doubt that the operation of the ordinary laws of grace, in the sphere of man's higher relationships, divine and human, admitted of special Divine interventions or thrusts for the speeding of the movement of humanity toward God and for the realisation of

God's Kingdom on earth. Christianity is not something new in the world—it is in vital connection with Judaism, prophetism and Mosaism,—with the religious life that went before. It is the bringing to completeness or fulfilment of what was imperfect. In " the fulness of the time " the Kingdom of God came in its fulness and perfection when Jesus Christ, in the form of man and with man's nature, enjoyed on earth perfect fellowship with God, realising in Himself absolutely the ideal expressed by the poet Tennyson :

" Our wills are ours we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

In Christ we see the perfect realisation of what all the true and pious in pre-Christian days were groping after and what we realise so imperfectly in these days of the effulgence of the knowledge and experience of the Divine glory. What it is we can know only as we enter the Kingdom itself, for it is life and thought gradually growing till it finally throws off the outward form in which the Kingdom idea is enclosed.

The government of Israel by Jehovah—or the theocracy—was the ideal constitution of the Jewish nation. It was the fundamental thought in Mosaism, and, though this ideal was not properly realised in the Promised Land and even the shadowy realisation of it was broken up with the fall of the State, it lived vividly in the view of the prophets and apocalyptists—a picture of the future in which all the blessing of heaven should be enjoyed and from which all defects should be removed and in which the promise should be fulfilled : " Ye shall be My people, and I will be your God."

The Hebrew people believed that Jehovah would

deliver them from their enemies and make them a glorious empire in which the heathen would be subject. The early conception of this empire was national and political (Psalm ii. 45, 72). New ideas arose with the approach of the fall of the Northern Kingdom, but these scarcely get beyond the narrow nationalist view, and it might be said that it was this view that prevailed throughout the Old Testament and the history of the Jewish nation and that that history was the history of a struggle of nationalism against imperialism. The hope that the chosen people would overcome the great empires of the world only expired with the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation in the year 70 A.D.—a destruction that was necessary to teach these people that their way was not God's way of establishing His Kingdom and of bringing men into fellowship with Himself and with one another in love.

With Isaiah and his contemporary, Micah, there is a new development of the Kingdom idea. The Kingdom is localised—its seat is in Zion. The King who is to introduce it is to come from Bethlehem (Micah ii. 5). The time is to be one of unprecedented prosperity (Isaiah xi. 1-5) and of universal peace, due to Jehovah's complete conquest of the nations in the interest of His people. The very nature of the new King will conduce to the termination of war. In Isaiah xi. 1-10 there is struck the key-note of a reign nobler than is possible for a mere conqueror. The peace that is to prevail shall flow from a knowledge of God as well as from the Davidic King.

In the post-exilic picture of the Kingdom in Deutero-Isaiah we see Zion filled again with glory

and Palestine changed into a garden of the Lord, while the people are taught of God. Idolatry disappears from the surrounding nations and a new song of praise is sung to Jehovah from one end of the earth to the other (xlii. 10, ff.). In chapters lxv.-lxvi. we have what Charles regards as a new view of the Kingdom. The view of the consummation hitherto held was that it would be realised on earth. The saints would rise from the dead and experience a second incarnation in order to enjoy citizenship in the perfected kingdom on earth. This idea is in Isaiah xxiv. 24, 25, 26. This view is also expressed in the oldest section of the Book of Enoch. But this conception was outgrown by the more thoughtful: it was felt that this earth was not a suitable scene for such a state, and it was, accordingly, bound to be in "a transformed heaven and earth." This final form arose about the close of the second century B.C., when in the growing dualism of the time it was borne in alike on saint and sage that this present world could never be the scene of the Eternal Messianic Kingdom—emphasis is laid in Daniel on the eternity of the Kingdom, ii. 44 and 27—and that such "Kingdom demanded not merely a new heaven and a new earth, akin in character to the old, but a new and spiritual Kingdom into which flesh and blood could not find entrance. The eternal Messianic Kingdom can attain its consummation only in a world to come into which the righteous shall enter through the gate of resurrection" (Charles' "Between the Old and New Testaments," pp. 70-71). The ordeal of the Exile taught the Jewish people many things. Their prophets—especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel—taught

them the importance of the individual, their own experience of communion with God led them to the conception of immortality and resurrection, while their separation from the Temple and Jerusalem and the fact of their being able to find God in Babylon made them greatly alter their ideas of God and His worship. Hence their conception of the Kingdom of God became more spiritual, and their contact with the world-powers made them take a broader view of it.

The Apocalyptists who wrote from 170 B.C. to the time of our Lord and on to St. Paul's time (e.g. 4th Ezra) bridged the chasm between the prophets of the Old Testament and the Baptist, the Forerunner of our Lord. Their writings and what is known as the Wisdom Literature—on these much light has been thrown during the last two or three decades—are a very important part of the background of the New Testament. Their study is essential to a proper understanding of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God in the Apostolic Writings, for they show how in the Jewish Church in the interval between the Old and New Testaments the Messianic hope was developed into the Revolutionary Messianism of the common people, on the one hand, and the eschatological Messianism of the Pharisees and educated classes on the other. The latter refused to place confidence, in connection with the establishment of the Kingdom, in anything but the super-human and the catastrophic. The former, or those of them who were known as Zealots or Revolutionaries, believed in forcing, as it were, the hand of God. Hence the frequent rebellious outbreaks which resulted in carnivals of blood such

as have occurrred in recent years under the Bolshevist régime in Russia.

The prophets were great religious and political reformers who emphasised the fact that, with the help of God, the Kingdom might be realised on earth; the Apocalyptists saw no germ of goodness in society and expected the Kingdom to come entirely from above. Their time was one of great distress. Persecution prevailed. Hence the Apocalyptists were afraid to write in their own names, and, instead, put their teaching in the form of visions supposed to have been seen by such as Enoch and Baruch. In describing their enemies and their own hope of victory over them they had to use symbolical language. Weird pictures and imagery were employed as symbols. Often the paraphernalia of the scenery and the wild riot of the symbolism concealed rather than revealed the faith of these writers and of this type of literature. Our best example is the Apocalypse of John. Beginning with Daniel the Apocalyptists, as a class, served well their day and generation, keeping the torch of hope burning in a time of great darkness. The foundation principle of their creed was the invincible conviction that human history would find its goal in a " Day of the Lord "—a day in which God would break again into the world and set up His ideal Kingdom and bring in that "great far-off divine event towards which the whole creation moves." They rejected the idea that the history of the race was a chaos of events. They recognised God in history, seeing running through it the thread of a divine purpose. What seems to others anarchy was to them the prelude to the inauguration of the ideal Kingdom of God.

The Apocalyptic writers drew a sharp distinction between the present age and the one to come. The coming age is transcendent, free from earthly limitations and a complete regeneration of the old order (Enoch lv. 4; 4 Ezra vii. 11). The new order corresponds to the original conception of creation in the mind of God.

This short survey of Jewish literature has helped to show that there were two views of the Kingdom of God which were outstanding and existing side by side, unreconciled: (1) The Kingdom was social, political and national and to be enjoyed on earth; (2) it was spiritual and to be realised in an absolutely new order of things in heaven or in a new heaven and a new earth, but unlike in character to the present. Dr. Leckie, breaking up these two conceptions, presents the consummated Kingdom in four forms and remarks: "The apocalyptic writers as a rule express no clear views as to the relation to the Unseen World." ("The World to Come" pp. 30-31.)

Then, as to who were to participate in the blessings of the consummated Kingdom, the common belief among the Jews was, that the Commonwealth of Israel was the Kingdom of God in principle. Those who were members of it would be members of the Kingdom when it appeared in its perfect form. Israel was in covenant relation with Jehovah and, if the chosen people did their part, God was sure to do His. But again and again the prophets had to declare that this mere outward obedience was not sufficient: that there required to be a change of attitude towards God—a change of soul and character. But, notwithstanding, there persisted

throughout the ages the idea that nationality—and not character—counted, that only Jews and such as were willing to become Jews by submitting to certain rites and observing certain commandments, would be blessed in the perfected Kingdom. The exile experience did much to correct wrong ideas, but pride of race continued; and the Baptist in preparing the way for the Founder of the New Dispensation had to denounce such views and such a frame of mind in the most scathing manner. Our Saviour's severest language was addressed against this spirit, and the history of the early Christian Church, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, shows how keen was the conflict which finally overcame the legalism and racial pride which had been standing in the way of the advancement of the Kingdom of God in the world.

How was the Kingdom of God expected to come? Jehovah was to introduce it either directly or by His Messiah.

Frequent references to the Messianic hope occur in the Jewish writings—canonical and non-canonical. It is, however, impossible to make a chronological classification of them. All that can be done is to bring them together on the basis of similarity of material and let them tell their tale. To do this is to get convinced that the popular conception of the Messianic hope is defective. "Everything ideal of its kind whatever that may be . . . whether it be king, priest, saint or people is interpreted in the New Testament as Messianic" (Davidson)—that is, it may be regarded as representative in some form of the final and perfect condition of the Kingdom. Any aspect of that state is so treated. The Messianic

hope is not a hope in respect to a personal Deliverer; *it is a hope in connection with an age.* It assumes different forms in different ages and brings into prominence different persons or agents in connection with the work of perfecting the Kingdom of God. At all times Jehovah's own operation and presence are dwelt upon as the essential Messianic element. When a personal Messiah emerges, he appears as a Deliverer whose power is from God.

In the teaching of Elijah and Elisha the Messianic hope consisted in the belief that the nation that worshipped Jehovah would be triumphant over its enemies. As far as we can learn from the records these prophets had no expectation of a super-human Deliverer. Amos, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Joel and Daniel pictured the future Kingdom without any reference to a personal Messiah. With them the fundamental thought was the presence and action of Jehovah. But glowing representations of a particular future Deliverer occur frequently in the Old Testament, and to these representations references are made in the New Testament. Examples of these are: Genesis xlix. 10, Isaiah ix. 6 f., Zech. ix. 9-10, etc. The features are, usually, those of an ideal King who will judge in righteousness and slay the wicked. This general conception takes different shapes in the imaginative faith of different prophets—in Isaiah vii. 14; xi. 1-4; Micah v. 2 ff.; Jer. xxv. 5 ff.; and this fact is particularly worthy of attention, in view of the different images in which Christ is described in the Apostolic writings—figures borrowed from the Old Testament.

Behind the monotheistic teaching of the prophets of the eighth century we get glimpses of a popular

belief in the coming of the Kingdom—a period of uninterrupted prosperity ushered in by a Day of the Lord. We see how the prophets struck out against the popular notion regarding the consummated Kingdom to the effect that Jehovah and His people were so inseparably connected that under no circumstances would He cast them off. So the Day of the Lord was sure to mean for them deliverance and triumph. " Woe unto you that desire the Day of the Lord . . . it is darkness and not light " fulminates Amos, the prophet, who, in his preaching and writing, uses traditional conceptions which later prophets transfigure. These conceptions, as Sellin, Oesterly and others have shown, were in the literatures of Eastern countries and particularly prominent in those of Babylonia and Egypt, as far back as 1,000 B.C. and could not have failed to influence the prophets of Israel. There is foretold a future epoch of blessing and of curse, with famine, war and pestilence and the darkening of the sun. In the midst of the scene appears a " royal deliverer who shall save the poor and banish falsehood." It is not surprising, therefore, to meet in Israel, at an early date, the idea of a personal Deliverer, and in the " fulness of time " to see the Magi coming from the East and enquiring " Where is He that is born King of the Jews ? "

In Christ was fulfilled the " desire " of the nations as well as the " hope " of Israel.

The highest hope of Israel was that of the perfect manifestation of Jehovah among His people. In Isaiah vii. 10-17 the Messiah is put in the line of this hope. Jehovah is to come down in the person of the Messiah—Immanuel—the pledge that He would

always be with His people and ultimately save them. The Child is to be a descendant of David, who, with the aid of Jehovah, is to deliver Israel and reign triumphantly for ever. He is to have the Spirit of God, and this Spirit is to be the source of His success (Isaiah xxxiii. 14-24). Micah pictures the coming King as hailing from Bethlehem—that is, as being of Davidic descent.

These expectations are, primarily, national, but their key-note is the deliverance to be wrought by Jehovah through the particular royal person in whose reign righteousness and peace are to be supreme in the world. This picture of the royal-King becomes a controlling element of the late Messianic hope.

Jeremiah expected Jehovah to place a descendant of David upon the throne, a righteous branch, and one who would deliver Israel. The glory of the Kingdom was to be enhanced by a new covenant to replace the broken covenant with Sinai. The new covenant would be spiritual and the relations which it would establish between Israel and Jehovah would be profoundly religious. Israel would be the servant of Jehovah who would forgive His people's sins. There is no reference to a personal Messiah in the account of the covenant, but if, as is confidently held by some competent critics, Deut. xviii. 15-19 belongs to this period, the hope included the expectation of some great person like unto and even *greater than* Moses.

At the time of the exile a new type of Messianic hope arose. A new nation would be formed, composed not of all who had gone into exile, but of the righteous who had been purified by suffering.

To this period belong the passages on the Servant of Jehovah—Isaiah xliii. 1-4, xlix. 5, lxi. 1-3, lii. 13-15, liii. 1-12. These passages have been interpreted in a Rabbinic, though in a collective, sense, as meaning we have here a description of a purified and vicarious remnant of Israel who are not only to be gloriously redeemed but are themselves to bring the knowledge of Jehovah to the rest of the world. This is becoming the current interpretation, but the personification is so complete that it readily yielded itself to the personal application of these passages to Jesus by the Apostles and subsequent Christian expositors. From this time forward a vicarious element is introduced into the Messianic expectation. The salvation of the people was to be effected by the suffering of the Saviour. From this part of the background of the New Testament fell upon Jesus the shadow of the Cross; for these passages influenced Him in determining how the Kingdom of God was to receive that impulse by means of which it was to become a reality among men as it never had been before.

After the Exile, the personal Deliverer is not described, but there is every reason to believe that, while the temple was being rebuilt and while the Maccabæan struggle was in progress, the Messianic hope was not altogether destroyed by tendencies to replace prophecy by the philosophy of experience, that the people expected Jehovah would make the Jewish nation a world-wide Empire, establish the house of David, punish the enemies of the chosen people—Jews and Gentiles—and that the glorious future of prophetic expectation would be introduced by the expression of the Divine power in the

resurrection of the individual from Sheol and of the nation from its miseries.

The time to which we have now come is one of unspeakable suffering. The triumph of the chosen people can be foretold only figuratively. The Book of Daniel, the first of the Apocalyptic writings, sees the victory of "the Kingdom of the Saints," symbolised by the expression—"Son of Man." There is no personal Messiah mentioned in the vision of Daniel, but by the time the Similitudes of Enoch (chaps. xxxvii.-lxxii. of the Book of Enoch) were written the phrase—"Son of Man"—was understood to refer to the Messiah, and Jesus applied it frequently to Himself as a Messianic title. In the Psalms of Solomon, which bring us very near the Christian era, the Messiah received a very prominent place. He is a mighty King, the vice-gerent of God and strong through the Holy Spirit, one who will conquer the world with the sword of His mouth.

Two conceptions of the Messiah were held by the Jewish people—human and super-human. According to the "human" view he was a highly gifted human being for whom no pre-existence in the heavenly regions is claimed. The other view represents Him as a super-human person, living in heaven and to be revealed at the appointed time when in the purpose of God the world's history is to reach its final crisis. But the work expected from the Messiah was pretty much the same in both cases—the judgment and overthrow of all evil powers, human and angelic, and the introduction of the Kingdom of God.

The human Messiah is generally regarded as

being of Davidic descent. Several times in the canonical and non-canonical Scriptures God is represented as promising to David that his house or throne shall be established for ever (2 Sam. vii. 12ff., Psalm lxxxix. 3, etc.; Psalms of Sol. xvii. 5; Sir. xlv. 25, etc.). This expectation of an ideal ruler of the house of David appears frequently in the New Testament where emphasis is laid on the Davidic descent of Jesus who is said to have been the seed of David (Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8) and is called the root of Jesse and the offspring of David (Rev. v. 5; xxii. 16). The genealogies in the first and third Gospels are intended to show Jesus' line of descent from David, the hero-King.

The human Messiah is also a "righteous branch," a "rod of righteousness." He shall judge people and nations in the wisdom of His righteousness (Psalms of Sol. xvii. 31). Other characteristics of Him are wisdom and humility. The language used of Him does not imply pre-existence. God raises Him and sends Him. He is God's servant and messenger, a Divinely appointed and Divinely equipped delegate who will carry out God's purpose, not His own. He will do everything in "obedience to the good ordinance of the mighty God (Sib. Or. iii. 625ff.). The qualities which fit Him for His work are bestowed upon Him by God. "God will make Him mighty by means of the Holy Spirit" (Psalms of Sol. xvii. 42). The glory of the Most High shall be upon Him. The heavens will open over Him and the Father's voice will speak to Him (Apoc. and Gospels).

The belief in the coming of a super-human Messiah arose in later Judaism. In the Similitudes of Enoch it is almost fully developed. He is like the

angels—His home is in heaven in God's immediate presence—a kind of arch-angel. He is charged to banish all evil. His coming is mysterious. "No man knoweth whence He is" (John vi. 27). The general expectation is that He will come from heaven where He is pre-existent. Jesus when born came from Heaven (John iii. 3 and 13), and unto Heaven He has ascended and from Heaven He will come again (Acts iii. 19-21; 1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 16f.; 2 Thess. i. 7). He comes with or on the clouds of heaven. He comes escorted by translated men and "holy ones" (angels). He comes with glory, fire and judgment. He existed from all eternity, from the creation of the world. His pre-existence is real, not ideal. Enoch has a vision of the Son of Man whose dwelling place is under the wings of the Lord of Spirits (1 Enoch xxxix. 6f.). The angel that goes with Enoch tells him that the Being whom he sees is the Son of Man "whom the Lord of Spirits hath chosen and whose lot has the pre-eminence before the Lord of Spirits, in righteousness for ever" (xlvi. 3). He is next to God the greatest being in the universe.

The two Messiahs are ethically perfect and the representatives of God. The one is born of human parents and the other is pre-existent and descends from heaven in a marvellous manner. They are expected to do practically the same work. Only it is the super-human Messiah who is to raise the dead and sit on God's throne at the final Judgment.

This survey of the Old Testament and Apocalyptic Scriptures enables us to see that, from the first time a Hebrew prophet or teacher spoke in Jehovah's name and of His promised deliverance of His down-trodden people, political oppression was

mitigated by ideal Utopias, very primitive at first, but as the ages passed becoming less exclusive and more spiritual. This idealism prevailed through all sorts of national circumstances. In times of prosperity, such as that of the Maccabees, the Messiah, through whom the new order was to be introduced, was not so prominent, probably because it was popularly believed that the Messianic age had already come, or because the author was afraid he might be suspected of political bias, as in the case of the writer in the Assumption of Moses. In the reign of Herod the Great there was nothing conducive to Apocalyptic, much less to revolutionary, Messianism. But after his death the Messianic hope became uncontrollable; and the result was the formation of various sects and the origination of revolts, not all religious or Messianic, which culminated in the War with Rome in 60-70 A.D. Hence the difficulties of Christ's preaching the Kingdom of God, without raising false hopes among the Jews and suspicions among the Romans, and His evident Messianic restraint because of the ecclesiastical authorities' opposition and the people's misapprehension.

Such were the conceptions of the Kingdom of God and of the Messiah by whom it was to be inaugurated, current in Palestine and in the Diaspora in the first century of the Christian era; and they form the background of the New Testament idea of the Kingdom. Were these conceptions accepted or modified in the Apostolic writings? What did the Baptist think of them? What rôle did Jesus play? How did the Apostles act in the matter? These are the questions which now require to be answered.

PART II

The Teaching of the Apostolic Writings on the Kingdom of God

CHAPTER III

The Doctrine of the Kingdom of God in the Synoptics

When we turn to the Apostolic writings we discover that the two conceptions of the Messiah and the two conceptions of His Kingdom are united in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ; the actual Messiah of God. In Him we also find the ideals of the prophets and saints of old realised in a fuller manner than was ever contemplated. Everything ideal in the Old Dispensation was brought to completion or fulfilment in Him.

In the Angelic Announcement to the mother of our Lord the promised Child was to be the offspring of her "who found favour with God" and of the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 35; Matt. i. 2). He was to be human and super-human. The two personal Messianic ideals are thus united in Him. Then, as to His function as Messiah, He was to sit upon the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Luke i. 32-33). He was to save His people from their sins, and of His Kingdom there should be no end (Luke i. 33; Matt. i. 21). Through Him the New Dispensation or Order would be introduced and would embrace the temporal, spiritual and eternal. Thus, both in His person and function, there is already seen to be a conjunction of the human and super-human taught in

a narrative which is well authenticated, coming from two independent sources; and the story was already in circulation while two of the brothers of Jesus were still living, James and Jude,—and perhaps Mary herself. The fact related is not any stranger than many another thing that has happened. In these days of wireless telegraphy, X-rays, radium, radiobes and relativity, science and philosophy are showing that it is difficult to say what may happen in nature, even if God does not exist. But if He does, as we believe, the supernatural birth, though it may remain a mystery, does not any more appear impossible. In fact, the only solution of the character and career of Jesus, as the inaugurator and embodiment of the perfect Kingdom of God, is the sublime union of God and man in Him, as indicated in the Gospel narrative.

The Baptist.

The importance of the Baptist in connection with the cause of the Divine Kingdom cannot be over-estimated. The Master Himself said of Him: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. xi. 11). He was greater than many of the prophets, and when he appeared, in the wilderness of Judea, in the year 26 A.D., as the new Elijah who was to come before the Great Day of the Lord, and was instrumental in the production of a great revival of religion, his topic of discourse to the immense crowds that came near to him was: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2).

In John we see the climax of the Old Testament Dispensation. He is himself evidently

conscious that new forces of infinite might are about to come into action for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The promised Messiah or King is about to come to establish His Kingdom, and he hears, in the silence of the Wilderness, the sound of His chariot wheels. Hence with all the concentrated energy of his being he prepares the way for the King, awakening interest in spiritual things among the people and helping to produce in them an attitude of mind favourable to the reception of the coming One and His message. And the Forerunner's mission was enormously successful.

Of this great forerunner of Christ it has been said by the angel who predicted his marvellous birth that he would be " great in the sight of God," full of the Holy Ghost, would go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, that he would turn many Israelites to God, and that many would rejoice at his appearance. And all this was fully realised. This Nazarite, with the uncut locks, had spent years in the stern school of the Wilderness, exercising the severest ascetism and contemplating the ways and promises of God. Then suddenly, after a silence of some four hundred years, the voice of a prophet was heard once more in Israel, for John, that picturesque figure dressed like Elijah (2 Kings xvlii.) issued from the Wilderness—so sacred to the Jews to whom the Rabbis had taught that from the Wilderness had come the law, the tabernacle, and all the other gifts of God to Israel. If ever a prophet arose he was sure to come from the Wilderness. Crowds therefore came to hear John. To the impression of these circumstances may be added the fact that at their feet flowed the Jordan, a river

with so many precious memories associated with it. There beside them was the very spot where Joshua once crossed with the Chosen People into the Promised Land. Greater events might be at hand. John both drew and impressed the multitude who rejoiced to hear a prophet who spoke in his own name for God and His Kingdom and told them that God was not far remote from the life of man, but near at hand. Spiritual things were made real to these people by the Baptist whose message searched them through and through as he exposed the sinfulness of the age. Confession of sin followed, and the converts were actually willing to submit to baptism —a rite usually administered to proselytes from the Gentile world who desired to join the community of Israel. Now John's proud hearers must have been humbled when they were willing to take their place as sinners beside the despised Gentiles. Such is ever the effect of a revival of religion, of the awakening of a sense of the Unseen and Eternal—national and racial barriers are dissolved. Pride of race and the foolish notion that mere descent from Abraham was sufficient to secure for them a place in the Kingdom of God evaporate in the heat of the great spiritual movement at Bethabara. The racial exclusiveness of post-exilic days received its deathblow. The Kingdom was no longer a thing relegated, as was done by the Apocalyptists, to a future beyond the world—by means of which arose the tendency to minimise the importance of the Messiah —but a force or a multitude of forces present in the world, capable of changing the life and character not only of the individual but also of the community. Prophecy broke through legalism and taught once

more that the Kingdom of God demanded a relationship to God that consisted not in a mere mechanical obedience to a code but a consecrated will and a transformed heart. Mere regret for sin and mere outward reformation were not enough to secure acceptance with God. A change of conception of God and of man was necessary, with the consequent change of character and conduct. Thus was the way prepared for the King.

In distant Nazareth the King is waiting for God's time which has now come. The great religious movement under the Baptist is to Him a matter of the greatest moment—it is the striking of the hour. Drawn by the chords of sympathy and vital interest He appears one day on the banks of the Jordan among the candidates for baptism. John is so impressed by Him that when the request for baptism is made he demurs saying: "I have need to be baptized of Thee and comest Thou to me?" (Matt. ii. 14). Jesus replies, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15). Jesus who had come to fulfil all righteousness (Matt. v. 17) shared John's passion for righteousness—the righteousness that kept man in covenant relation with God and of which baptism was the outward sign. He would also share it in the task of rescuing it from the false interpretation put upon it by the Pharisees. And later, as He Himself taught the people, He insisted that as a condition of membership in the Kingdom of God one required a righteousness that exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees. John's baptism related to more than the confession or remission of sin. Its scope was much wider—its ultimate significance lay in the

preparation for the Kingdom of God and the New Society which Christ came to call into being and introduce. Thus Jesus in submitting to baptism at the hands of the Baptist, definitely dedicated Himself to the service of the Kingdom, separating Himself from the position of a private Jew, and took up the Messianic vocation to which all else must be subordinate. It was an action that meant the undertaking of a moral task, "implying an ever-deepening obedience, an ever-expanding spiritual achievement, an ever-enlarging victory over all that could compete with His Father's will or compromise the interests of the Kingdom" (Salmond, Century Bible). Thus was righteousness rescued as something not outward or of the letter, but of the Spirit and that the filial Spirit. No wonder, then, that in these circumstances the heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and the Divine Voice spoke saying: "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22).

The Forerunner, moved by the Divine Spirit, had announced the coming of the Messiah in the immediate future. The fact that he did not recognise Him at the Jordan is said by some critics to disagree with what is stated in the first chapter of the Fourth Gospel, and the Synoptics and that Gospel are said not to harmonise in their descriptions of Jesus and John. There is no discord once one takes in the whole situation. The Baptist did not recognise Jesus as the Messiah before the Baptism; he was only conscious of His moral superiority to himself. John i. 33 is clear and emphatic on this point. It says in effect, as Westcott points out:

"I, His precursor, who should have been more swift than any other to recognise in Him the fulfilment of my message—I knew Him not." But in the moment of administering baptism to Jesus John's eyes were opened and he then recognised in Jesus the Son of God. The Synoptics give us the Baptist's opinion of Jesus before the Baptism; the Fourth Gospel his view of Him after that event.

Some scholars regard the statement in John i. as to the Baptist's recognition of Jesus as the Messiah as inconsistent with the question sent by John from the prison into which he had been thrown by Herod. They say, if John had recognised Jesus as the Divine Messiah, he could not have afterwards asked: "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" Professor Ernest Scott in his book "The Kingdom and the Messiah," asserts that here we have not the case of "faith on the wane but just beginning to grow." He says: "if Jesus had been recognised as Messiah crowds would have been following Him and He would not have been under the necessity of working in obscurity in Galilee." But crowds did actually follow Him in Galilee and elsewhere, and if He did not disclose openly and early the secret of His Messiahship it was because of the wrong conceptions of the Kingdom of God that were generally entertained—conceptions which by His teaching He was endeavouring to correct. Criticism of this kind forgets the facts of human nature. It was one thing for John to believe when in the actual presence of our Lord; it was quite another matter to remain unshaken in faith when he was lying in the dark dungeon of Machærus. Some say he was only growing restive as his prophecy of judgment

upon the wicked was not fulfilled—another Jonah sorely displeased because God was more merciful than himself! John was greater than the greatest of the prophets and we are not to read him thus. Others hold that his own faith did not waver, but that he wished confirmation of Jesus' Messiahship for the sake of his followers. This theory, as Plummer shows in his International Commentary on Matthew, is contradicted by the text of our Lord's reply: "Observe for yourselves, but go and tell John—not blessed are ye but blessed is he." John's faith was greatly strained, and no wonder, but it was not broken. Jesus does not rebuke him but encourages him when he is naturally greatly depressed and shows him that He has faith in him. He merely quoted a Messianic passage, knowing well the interpretation His forerunner would put on it. Then to prevent any misunderstanding on the part of the people, Jesus gives them His estimate of the unprecedented service rendered to the King and Kingdom by John.

What was John's own view of the Kingdom of God? Some contend that John's aim was patriotic as well as moral and religious and that this accounts largely for his popularity. In support of this view there is brought forward the fact of John's imprisonment which is alleged to have been due to the fear, on the part of Herod, that John's influence with the people might lead to a revolt. Josephus' authority is quoted in support of this contention. It is further said that the song attributed to Zacharias in the narrrative of John's birth is semi-political and that, consequently, John was brought up in a political atmosphere and could not but have

a certain political bias. It is said that the revolutionary movement in Palestine grew more vigorous at the appearance of the Baptist. That may have been so but John did not encourage it. The circles in which Jesus and John were reared were the most spiritually minded in the whole nation. Among them revolutionary politics were not countenanced. That Herod's bad conscience made him suspicious proves nothing. John clearly laid emphasis on righteousness. His attitude to the official religion was not hostile, and his teaching shows a closer affinity with the Pharisees than with the Zealots. The Baptist's testimony to Jesus, as the former stood one day looking at Him, rapt in the glory of the vision, and exclaimed: "He standeth in the midst of you and ye know Him not"—and his teaching generally greatly helped the cause of the Kingdom of God. Jesus, when He began to proclaim His Kingdom, employed the very formula used by John. The rôle the Messiah was to play or the way in which the Kingdom was to be firmly established was clearly indicated by John's words: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 36).

No sooner had the Messiah entered upon His ministry than He was driven by the Holy Spirit that had so fully taken possession of Him into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan (Mark i. 12; Matt. iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1-13.)

The account of the three-fold temptation must have been given to the disciples by Jesus Himself. Whether the story is read literally or allegorically the truth it teaches is the same and that truth we may assert with confidence was suggested by the person

and work of the Baptist from whom He had so lately parted.

It is generally supposed that it was on the memorable occasion of His Baptism of consecration that there was borne in upon Jesus' soul the consciousness of a special vocation—and the title "Beloved Son" at the Jordan described it in His mind. But while we can only surmise as to this, there is clear evidence that eighteen years before, Jesus, when in the Temple, was conscious of a special relation to God—"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49). In the interval the work of preparation for His great mission was going on and His Messianic consciousness was increasing till, in the year 26 A.D., "the man and the hour" met under the auspicious circumstances of a great religious revival which seems to have swept over the whole of Palestine. The call of His Father to Jesus then meant to Him action. The rite of Baptism which He took advantage of at the Jordan was, to Him, a symbolic representation of His consecration to Messiahship and even of His Death and Resurrection by means of which He was to introduce the New Dispensation. The use of the words "If Thou art the Son of God" twice by the tempter in the Wilderness is enough to show that the temptation had a close connection with His vocation and with the best way of accomplishing it.

As Jesus asked Himself how His work was best to be done, the influence of the Forerunner over the men of His generation was something from which to work. He would have recalled the vision of the ascetic figure and the stern words in which there was

no evidence of the least compromise with popular ideals or of concession to the standard of his hearers. John's teaching could have been anything but palatable to those addressed. Yet John had succeeded and had won, in fact, the only success worth winning. But he had used no compulsion such as miracles to "force faith"—only the ordinary methods of persuasion. That was the method He would adopt. And that was the method He used—miracles with Him being the exception, not the rule.

So, Jesus emerged from His retirement victor over the great temptation and determined that He would not let any thought of personal comfort enter into the performance of His task of Messiahship.

He would not seek acceptance for His message by adopting the ideals of His contemporaries in so far as these ideals were materialistic or otherwise imperfect. He would not try to promote the interests of His Kingdom by yielding to popular prejudices. He would base His appeal for men's allegiance on the intrinsic truthfulness and power of the Gospel of the Kingdom and would not employ the motives of superstitious awe to extract from men professions that were not inspired by love of God and of goodness. But though the victory was decisive and His choice of a road to the Messianic goal final, the temptation came back again and again from friends and foes up to the time when on the Cross He was able to say: "It is finished."

Harnack remarks that the "recital by Jesus of the temptation story goes on the supposition that He already regarded Himself as the Son of God and that He had resisted temptations which bear

upon His Messianic consciousness." ("What is Christianity?" p. 88.)

The Threefold Temptation was a challenge to the newly-proclaimed Messiah to act upon and exploit the position assigned to Him at the Jordan and to advance to His Crown not in the way of obedience and suffering but by a royal road of masterful assertion and power. The Spirit world was already aware of His Messianic claims, and that knowledge afterwards re-appeared in the narratives which tell of the demoniacal possession. Satan had so long had a hold of the hearts of men that he claimed a right of way. But here was the emancipator of Satan-enslaved humanity to dispute Satan's right and wrest from him his prey. The hero was no ordinary man, nor even an extraordinary person. Must we not say what is implied in the narrative—that He was the Son of God—a fact which is required to explain the defeat of the powerful and wily rival?

As might be expected, there is little on the surface, at least in the Synoptics, about the person and claims of Jesus Himself; there is a great deal about the Kingdom. But the reverse is the case in the other writings of the New Testament which are concerned mainly with the interpretation of our Lord's teaching. The reason is that the writers realise that everything depends upon who Christ was—that the nature of the Messianic Kingdom depended upon the person of the Messiah, and that His teaching can only be understood when the greatness of His personality is appreciated. But there is enough in the first three Gospels about the claims of Jesus, as Messiah, to prove that He more than

fulfilled the highest hopes of Israel. He was not only the ideal King of the house of David, but He was also the Divine Christ, the Saviour-King of the world.

This aspect of our subject is considered in the chapter on *The Gospel of the Kingdom according to the Apostles* and requires only to be referred to here. But there is a fact that must be emphasised at this stage—that in proclaiming the Kingdom of God and indicating its nature Jesus was mainly guided, not by the Baptist or apocalyptists or prophets—He made use of them all—but by His own religious and Messianic consciousness. His filial communion with the Father was unbroken, and this is the " supreme fact about Jesus and constitutes His originality and permanent claim on the devotion of mankind. In the light of it we must interpret all His reported sayings. Specially must we regard His use of the traditional forms as modified by it " (Leckie, " World to Come," p. 44). Also, Jesus is not to be regarded as the " unlettered peasant " of common tradition but as one familiar with Rabbinic modes of thought and having before His mind what we have called the " Background of the Apostolic writings." He made use—as did His Apostles after Him—of imagery and ideas borrowed from that literature and filled them with a new content drawn from His own consciousness of Divine Sonship and Messiahship. That consciousness led Him to the conclusion that the Messianic idea was not large enough to contain Him. He embodied it but He changed it, combining it with the conception of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah and enriching it with His own experience. " His

fellowship with the Father," says Dr. Leckie, " conditioned His thought about the Kingdom and His supremacy therein—created and informed His conviction that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Messiahship was but the transparent lamp ; His individuality was the light that illumined it. Indeed, Christian faith has always discerned this truth. It has penetrated, by a kind of intuition, to the secret of His personality and has found Him to be greater than the Christ, more human than the Son of man and more divine that the Lord of the Kingdom " (op. cit. p. 46). Having dealt with these necessary preliminaries we propose to make what can only be, within the narrow compass of this book, a short survey of the teaching of Jesus and His apostles on the subject of the Kingdom of God.

In his highly suggestive book, " Christ and the Social Order," Principal Clow says that " Jesus inherited and accepted a moral and spiritual idea of a Kingdom. But to its eternal form He paid no regard. He taught that the conception of an earthly ruler as guardian and leader of the Hebrew people had had its day. He made the great distinction that there was no more a Kingdom of Israel and a Kingdom of David but a Kingdom of heaven and a Kingdom of God . . . . . Under these phrases —Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God—Jesus included every aspect of His social ideal." But, surely, there are some elements in the teaching of Jesus on His social ideal not covered by these phrases, which are identical. Is it not evident that our Lord found the Kingdom-of-God phraseology insufficient to express His thoughts regarding

God's relation to men and men's relation to God and to one another? Instead of supplementing the phrase "Kingdom of God," by "the Kingdom of Heaven," Jesus spoke of His Father in Heaven, including under the categories of the Kingdom of God and the Fatherhood of God (and the consequent Brotherhood of man) what He wished to express as His social ideal which was "the fellowship of men with God and with one another in love."

When Jesus began His public ministry, while the "moral ideal inherited and accepted by Him" was entertained only by a few of His countrymen, the great majority thought of the restoration of the old Davidic theocratic Kingdom. Even a superficial study of the Synoptics will suffice to convince the reader that Jesus felt bound to proclaim the Kingdom of God, not in terms acceptable to the populace, but contrary to their preconceptions and prejudices. He proclaimed not the Kingdom of David but the Kingdom of His Father and the Father of the righteous (Matt. xxvi. 9). That He set Himself the task of purifying and exalting current Messianic ideas is evident from His answers to the Pharisee's question as to when the Kingdom was to come (Luke xvii. 20). That He did not consider the Davidic origin a satisfactory status for the Messiah, is shown by His questions to His disciples at Cæsarea Philippi. "He claimed for Himself," says Dalman, "an exalted position such as had not been assigned to the Messiah" ("Words of Jesus," p. 313). According to Harnack, "He left far behind Him the idea of Messiah because He had filled it with a content that burst it" ("What is Christianity?"). The Kingdom "of our Father

David " recalled the idea of the theocratic ruler, the representative of Jehovah, the ideal Son whose throne was insured and on whom the prophets built their hopes for the future. The ideal, however, was modified and materialised in the struggle with Antiochus Epiphanes and Rome and in contact with Greek thought, so that the people were looking for a Deliverer with the heroic qualities of Judas Maccabeus and for an earthly empire cosmopolitan and world-ruling like Rome. Jesus had, therefore, to lead His hearers back to the prophets, especially to Daniel who pictured the Kingdom of God as spiritual and eternal and holy and universal, and to rescue the great ideal from the " lumber-room of tradition." And as He combined in Himself the two-fold Jewish ideal of the Messiah—human and super-human—so also with regard to the two-fold ideal of the Kingdom of God as present and future ; what appear as antinomies form a synthesis in His presentation of the ideal.

Jesus in His teaching destroyed the formal Messianic content of the Kingdom. To Him it was a regenerate humanity, not a conquering Jewish nation. God is described not as King but Father (the two ideas were no doubt closely associated in the Semitic mind as Robertson Smith shows in his " Religion of the Semites "). The Father gives the Kingdom and, as being already present, social results are bound to follow. People must experience release from oppression and misery. To postpone effects would be to ostracize God and threaten the very foundation of religion. But the results must come, not by a violent upheaval, but by the gradual permeation of the social and

political fabric by the Spirit of the Kingdom. There must be no revolution in the Zealot's sense of the word. But Jesus agreed with them in His forecast of social reforms. He also taught that the Kingdom was a thing of the future and would come from heaven. Thus, He embraced the best elements of the conceptions of the Kingdom of God held by both Zealots and Pharisees.

The question had been asked, what does Jesus mean by the Kingdom ? Is it present or future ? He says it is both, and our endeavour shall be to ascertain what His meaning was.

There are several passages, which cannot be gainsaid by criticism, clearly teaching that Jesus regarded the Kingdom as present in the sense that He can actually convey to men now a share of its divine blessings. The Kingdom is very near in Matt. iv. 17 and Mark i. 15. It is something that can be witnessed by the men of the existing generation. The time has come for its establishment on the earth (Luke x. 11). In Mark ix. 1 the note of time is most marked : " There be some of them that stand here who shall not taste of death till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power." The Kingdom is spoken of as actually present in the statement : " The Kingdom of God is within you " (Luke xvii. 21) which may also be read " the Kingdom of God is among you." The first translation, which is supported by the logia recently discovered by Grenfell and Hunt, means that the Kingdom is something spiritual and is in the heart. The fact that the words were addressed to Pharisees is not a weighty objection to this interpretation, seeing that the disciples and other devoted followers of

Jesus were also present. If we take the second translation the meaning is that the Kingdom was present in the person of Jesus Himself, perfectly, and in others, imperfectly. The words, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils the Kingdom of God is come upon you" (Matt. ii. 28) imply that in the expulsion of evil spirits the Kingdom was present; and that it was supplanting the reign of Satan is indicated by the figurative and forcible words of Jesus: "I beheld Satan falling as lightning from heaven" (Luke x. 18). There are also several parables which teach that the Kingdom is a present reality, especially the parables of growth (Matt. xiii.). The Kingdom is, indeed, present and people are pressing into it. It is something of very great value, to be sought before everything else (Matt. vi. 33). It is such a dispensation or day of grace, a time of such spiritual privilege and power that the very least in it is greater than the great Baptist himself, lying in prison and shut out from its enjoyment. The Kingdom, Jesus feels, is present in Himself, and through Him its fulness is to be received. Of this He is confident and His confidance is rooted in His filial consciousness of the Father's indwelling power. He knows that in Himself the promises and ideals of the past have come to full realisation.

But in the face of these sayings and facts there are critics—Schweitzer and his school—who assert that Jesus only proclaimed a Kingdom that was purely future, not even dynamically present; that He predicted its extreme nearness, but that He waited, like the rest of the world, for God to bring it in supernaturally; that He had come to believe

that His death would constitute an atonement that would enable God to remit the great tribulation that must usher in the Messianic era; that at the moment of death, or on the third day after, He would attain a supernatural form of being, be invested with Messianic glory, and bring in the end of things—the Judgment and the Kingdom. "Events," say they, "took another course, and going up to Jerusalem He met His doom and expired with the cry of despair." The leaders of this School of critics did much in the way of drawing attention to many neglected elements in the teaching of Jesus, but their interpretation of the Synoptics is wide of the mark, as it rests on the consideration of only half the facts—the other half being resolutely ignored. The groups of sayings which speak of the Kingdom as present occupy a place in the narrative that cannot be contested.

On the other hand, there are many passages in the recorded teaching of Jesus which point to the Kingdom as future. Jesus is represented as believing that He, as the greatest of all moral and religious reformers, was engaged not only in a work that was for the good of men in time but also, as the Messiah, was God's agent in establishing the perfect final order—completely expressive of the divine mercy and righteousness—by sudden revelation and judgment. Of this perfect dispensation Jesus speaks in the future tense. "There be some here that stand by who shall in no wise taste death till they see the Kingdom of God with power" (Mark ix. 1). Entrance into the Kingdom is referred to as future (Matt. vii. 21; Mark ix. 47). When instituting the Lord's Supper Jesus said: "I will no more

drink of the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God" (Mark xiv. 25). Preparatory to the Kingdom the Gospel is to be preached throughout the world. We also find the term used in connection with the last judgment: "Then shall the King say to them on His right hand . . . Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34). The Kingdom in this sense means a new heaven and a new earth in which all the death and suffering of the present age as well as sin shall be destroyed. It is something that will come suddenly as a thief in the night. Several of the parables deal with the Kingdom in this sense. Also the eschatological discourses in the three Gospels, whose main ideas have emanated from Jesus, describe this aspect of the Kingdom.

Wellhausen and his followers maintain that the prominence of these eschatological ideas in the teaching of Jesus must be traced to later influences. The Kingdom to them is merely "a principle working invisibly in the hearts of individuals." They hold that, probably, Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah and that the passages which indentify Him with the Heavenly Son of Man or predict His advent on the clouds of heaven belong to the later eschatology of the Church; that Jesus' interest was in ethics—that He cared only for purity of heart, true worship and fraternal love; that He aimed at the moral regeneration—animated by religion—of the world; that consequently the moral content of His teaching wholly overshadowed the eschatological aspect of the Kingdom conception; that after His death the disciples began to

proclaim the eschatological hope and also attributed to Him prophecies of His death and resurrection.

In reply it may be said with the utmost confidence that Jesus did claim to be the Messiah. Is it not evident from His recorded sayings and doings? To take only a few out of the many passages where it is implied, did Jesus not claim to be the Messiah in His message to the Baptist (Matt. xi. 28)? Then at Cæsarea Philippi what is the meaning of the scene there, if it is not that He made such a claim and that it was recognised by His disciples? Further, in the triumphal entry into Jerusalem a few days before His death was this claim not made and openly and enthusiastically acknowledged by the crowd among whom were, no doubt, some of those who had forsaken Him in Galilee because He would not be crowned to fulfil popular, earthly, Messianic expectations—brought back probably as the result of the great impression made by the raising of Lazarus from the dead? That the people were unanimous about Him, seems to be implied in the fact that there was no riot, and that the Jewish authorities did not interfere with Him either at the time of this demonstration or later, while He was performing His Messianic task of cleansing the Temple of God. "It is as nearly historically certain as anything can be that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah" (Principal Cairns "Christianity in the Modern World," p. 170). Then as to the eschatological strain in Jesus' teaching, it is so pervasive and characteristic that it cannot be so easily disposed of as these critics imagine. It is, no doubt, accentuated in the later days of His ministry when, as the end approached and He was conscious He had

not as yet given full expression to the riches of the Kingdom, "He put the reserved elements of His teaching into symbolic form and used the current and familiar imagery of Jewish Apocalyptic, just as He had already used it in asserting His Messianic claim—by using the term Son of Man." (Cairns, op cit.). The eschatological elements appear in the other Apostolic writings, but instead of their becoming more prominent with the passage of time, as they should under the theory in question, we discover—as Prof. Andrews points out in the London Theological Essays, p. 73—that "far from intensifying the eschatological elements we have clear evidence that Christian theology softened and spiritualised them. We find unmistakable proof of this when we compare the earlier and the later epistles of St. Paul; and the process of spiritualisation reaches its climax in the Fourth Gospel."

These contending schools of interpreters—those of Schweitzer and of Wellhausen—are entirely unsatisfactory in their treatment of the teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God, for the establishment of their theories would require the re-writing of the Synoptics. They seek to get rid of an apparent contradiction by ignoring, as we have seen, half the facts. We must take all the facts, that is, all the sayings that speak of the Kingdom as present and future and seek their harmony in an explanation consistent with our high estimate of the Great Teacher and of the record of His teaching.

What is there to explain the diversity of representation? Some critics assert that, from time to time and in the light of experience, Jesus changed His views as to the date of the establishment of the

Kingdom of God—that He started with the idea that it was at hand, that His early success led Him next to regard it as actually come, but that the ultimate rejection of Him by the people made Him relegate its appearance to the future. There is no evidence in the Gospels for such conclusions as these. The two views of the Kingdom are not successive; they are synchronous, found side by side in the same chapter and sometimes even in the same verse (Matt. x. 15; Luke xviii. 17). The explanation is to be found in Christ's own personality and in what He says about His Parousia. The term—Kingdom of God—is not always used by Him in the same sense. The Kingdom, as the reign of God in the hearts of men with all its attendant blessings, is an ideal susceptible of different degrees of realisation, and is never in this life realised other than imperfectly. When Jesus began His ministry, and during its course, He could speak of it as, in one sense, near in the lives of prospective or actual disciples and as really present in His own person. In the lives of believers it was waiting to be revealed in its perfected condition, but was perfectly embodied in Himself, and present. It was in the germ in those who had faith in Him, and it would be there in its perfect manifestation when sin and death were overcome. So we must conclude that, while there is a difference in the modes of Jesus' manifestation of the Kingdom, there is no contrariety. Thus we are helped to understand some of the difficult passages that speak of the Kingdom as present and future; for to be able to appreciate Jesus' meaning when He speaks of His own Parousia, will help us to understand the others. Jesus'

teaching concerning the Kingdom demands, as its completion, the Parousia prophecy which tells of the consummation of the Kingdom.

"The Parousia is the process of the victory of the Kingdom and its climax" (Cairns). The teaching on the Parousia is in Apocalyptic garb and it is, therefore, necessary for us to bear in mind that as such it is lofty spiritual poetry. When Jesus says: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64), He clearly means not physical re-appearance, as the word "henceforth" must be understood as conveying the idea "from this time forward." The expression must be, therefore, taken as symbolical, implying that Christ is the vicegerent of God and is ever and again coming in special manifestation of the divine power. There is a process implied which finally reaches a culmination. The Comings are stages in the realisation of the divine purpose which will be perfectly fulfilled in the consummation associated with the true and final coming of the Lord. And this kind of teaching the disciples received the moment they were ready for it. Immediately after the great confession at Cæsarea Philippi Jesus began to speak to them plainly of His death. Preaching and teaching were not sufficient to introduce the Kingdom of God with power. The Messiah must die for His people that suffering love may soften hardened sinners and reconcile them to God. How effective this way of bringing men into the fellowship with God was going to be, was proved on the Cross when the degraded thief was converted and cleansed from his sins and passed with the Christ into the

Paradise of God. Jesus seldom spoke of His death, without informing His disciples of His resurrection. As the end approached He told them that His going away was really a coming to them. He was simply going to occupy a vantage ground from which He would be able to exercise greater influence upon them and the world. They would receive His spirit and He would be with them at every stage of the way. We are to remember that the expression—" the coming of the Son of Man "—was used in more than one sense, just as in the Old Testament Scripture we find " the coming of the Lord " employed in different senses to signify any signal manifestation of His presence either for judgment or mercy. In fact, able critics of the Apostolic writings with little bias in favour of orthodoxy, recognise three distinct senses in which the words " the coming of the Son of Man " are used. There is, first, His Coming in the heart of believers and by the communication of the Holy Spirit. This is the meaning in the passages : " We will come unto Him and make our abode with Him " (John xiv. 23), and " Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come unto you " (John xiv. 28). In the latter text there is no " again " in the Greek as we have in the Authorized Version, as if the going was the coming—the going in the flesh was the coming in the spirit. Next, His coming is at any great crisis, as at the destruction of Jerusalem, and at the firm establishment in the world of His Kingdom—His coming in the display of His signal and victorious power. This is the sense in which we are to understand Matt. xxvi. 64, already quoted and remarked on ; also " until that day when I

drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom" (Matt. xxvi. 29). Thus also are we to regard most of the statements in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi. Then, there is the third meaning of the words "the Coming of the Son of Man"—His Coming at the end of the world to determine the destinies of mankind, and to bring the present system of things to a close. This Coming is known as the Second Advent and is expressed in the passages "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him shall be gathered all the nations" (Matt. xxv. 3) and "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32).

If Jesus professed ignorance of the hour when the end will come it may be remarked that this does not imply a depreciation of His divinity; for He consented in His state of humanity to limitations of His conscious knowledge and to silence outside its bounds. "If He did not know," says Principal Forsyth in "The Person and Place of Christ," p. 317, "it is because He consented not to know. And whatever He did not know, He at least did know the root, key and goal of all knowledge." Prof. H. R. Mackintosh in "The Doctrine of the Person of Christ," p. 477, observes: "He was of limited powers which could be and were thwarted by persistent unbelief; of limited knowledge which, being gradually built up by experience, made Him liable to surprise and disappointment. Christ, who, in virtue of His relation to the Father, had divine knowledge within reach, took only what was essential to His vocation." To know the day or the

hour was not good for the disciples (Acts i. 7); and we shall see later on that, while the great doctrine of the Second Coming itself bore good fruit in watchfulness, earnestness and activity, once Christians began to speculate as to "that day or that hour" the result—spiritual and moral—was extremely harmful. The date of the Consummation was left uncertain because the Father intended it to be dependent upon the attitude of man. "God will not," says Prof. Hogg in "Christ's Message of the Kingdom," "bind Himself by any prediction of the time of the consummation, but reserves to Himself full freedom to send it whenever He sees that human conditions are right for it" (cf. Mark iv. 29). "When the fruit is ripe straightway He putteth forth the sickle because the harvest is come." Jesus' interest lay not in times or seasons but in His own personal oneness with the Father whose purpose cannot fail and whose will to vouchsafe perfect redemption stands fast. His desire for His followers is not that they should get to know the date of the final Parousia, but that they should be sure they are in fellowship with God the Father.

The three different meanings which we have given to the phrase "The Coming of the Son of Man," Holtzmann calls, respectively, the Dynamical and Historical and Apocalyptic Comings. If the student of the Synoptics bears these facts in mind he will not find very great difficulty in understanding the passages which speak of the "Coming of the Son of Man" or Christ, to establish His Kingdom.

The Apocalyptic Parousia is followed by the Judgment which disposes of God's enemies and brings in the era of perfection.

In the Synoptics the doctrine of the Resurrection is assumed rather than taught. Of it Jesus has no doubt. The life immortal of the Kingdom of divine fellowship He is ever conscious of—a life that must prevail over death and the grave. All sharing it through faith in Himself as its great Mediator will be lifted up with Him and none of them will be lost at the Great Day. But before the end came Jesus spoke clearly on this matter, pointing out that before the final order could be established a general resurrection would take place as a result of His great Parousia, that a throne of judgment would be set up and that before Him as Judge—for to Him the Father committed all judgment—there would be gathered all nations—Jews and Gentiles, dead and living (Matt. xii. 41; xxv. 31-46; cf. John v. 28-29). This was to Him the great Day of the Lord—the Day of universal inquisition when the destiny of man would be finally fixed.

The standard according to which the final judgment will be pronounced is thus stated: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me" . . . "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto Me." In other words, the possession or non-possession of the Spirit of Christ determines whether one is accepted or rejected. A man's character on earth determines his fate beyond the grave. Immediately the test of character is applied a decision of the great multitude occurs—the unrighteous or those not right with God in Christ and, consequently, not right with their fellow men, depart into eternal punishment; while the righteous who served God in Christ by serving their fellow-men

on earth "inherit the kingdom . . . prepared from the foundation of the world."

The test applied to men in the last Judgment—as described by Jesus—throws a flood of light upon His whole teaching by word, deed and suffering in the interests of the Kingdom of God. It lets us see why He spoke as He did on how to get entrance into, and maintain our citizenship in, the Kingdom of God; why the change of attitude and outlook which required the figure of a new birth to express, and faith in Himself, were so essential, together with repentance in respect to a self-seeking, soul-destroying past life. It shows us that the Sermon on the Mount and the rest of the teaching of Jesus on conduct were not a mere interim-ethic without reference to character and destiny, but the very life principles by which human lives were to be regulated and the Christ-like character shaped, which would secure "an abundant entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The Apostle Paul knew the mind of the Master when he wrote: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. vi. 7-8).

"We shape ourselves the joy or fear
With which the coming life is made,
And fill our future atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.

The tissues of the life to be,
We weave with colours all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap what we have sown."

CHAPTER IV

The Doctrine of the Kingdom of God in the Apostolic Teaching and Fourth Gospel

(1) The View of the Church at Jerusalem

What the views of the Church at Jerusalem on the Kingdom of God were, we gather from the first part of Acts, especially from the addresses of Peter, the Epistles—1 Peter and James—and the Apocalypse. In this group of writings may be placed also 2 Peter and Jude for reason of similarity of teaching.

At the beginning of Acts we see that the Apostles still held their erroneous conception of the Kingdom of God. They asked Jesus after the Resurrection when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel (Acts i. 6); and they were thinking of an earthly Kingdom. But the experiences of Pentecost, which soon followed, helped to open their eyes and enable them to see that the Kingdom was already being realised. Of this they were convinced by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and by the mighty works that were being done by themselves with the aid of the Spirit. There was no longer any doubt in their minds that Jesus was the Christ (v. 42). How could there be in view of the Resurrection and the Pentecostal blessings? Jesus was now on the throne and administering His affairs. The descent of the Holy Spirit was in fulfilment of the promise

of their Master which was in the line of prophecy, as Peter reminded his hearers on the day of Pentecost. The Kingdom of God, as that of grace, was in their midst and, though the King was absent in the body, He was present in the Spirit. The Kingdom was advancing and the King Himself might appear at any time to bring it to completion. The members of the Church at Jerusalem were in daily expectation of the dawning of eternity upon them when they would see and enjoy the glories of the exalted Messiah's reign. Hence joy and the spirit of sacrifice characterised their daily life. They were ever ready to help. Property was sacrificed for Christ and His Kingdom. It was regarded as the greatest honour to suffer for His name; for in Him the promises of God to His people were fulfilled and the spiritual enjoyment of His presence and power was but the foretaste of the experience of the Kingdom of Glory which might be introduced at any moment.

These early followers of Jesus Christ felt that their hopes were about to be fully realised. They were not in sympathy with the Zealots; there was no revolution in their thoughts. Their leader had been executed as a political agitator, but they knew that the charge was false. What had happened since had proved this conclusively to friends and foes. Jesus had entered "on His Kingdom immediately on His exaltation in recognition of His obedience to death" (Weiss, "New Testament Theology"). He had not died involuntarily but voluntarily as the Christ of God. They were now beginning to see that the Cross had a close connection with the Coming of the Kingdom in power. Jesus

would appear again to consummate the Kingdom into which would be received only Jews who believed on Him as the Messiah, and believing proselytes from among the Gentiles. And it was believed still that Jesus, the Christ, might openly appear and assume Messianic sway in a renovated Israel—an idea which may have been suggested to the early Christians by Micah, chap. iv. 8. It was perhaps the belief that the Kingdom might be manifested in Jerusalem that had caused the followers of Jesus to gather there after their return to their homes in Galilee (Mark xvi. 7; John xxi.); and this idea, combined with the fact that the first Apostles were not advanced enough in thought on the Kingdom of God to sympathise with Stephen's view, may have had something to do with their lingering in Jerusalem when others were preaching the Gospel in Samaria and in distant parts—even as far as Antioch. Their old hopes of an earthly Jewish Empire, in which they should occupy high places, revived with the conviction that the Cross was the way—strange and mysterious but contemplated by prophecy—through which the Messiah was to enter upon His glory.

In His address in Acts ii. 14 seq., Peter implied that his hearers were living in the "last days," that is, in the days that would close the epoch—to be followed by the Judgment that would introduce the truly Messianic era or the perfected Kingdom of God. The evil age in which they lived was under the control of Satan (Acts v. 3) but was to be soon replaced by the new era, for Christ was now in possession of Messianic authority, as evidenced by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and by the cures

effected in His name (Acts iii. 6 and 16 ; iv. 10, etc.). Christ is represented as taking the place of God in relation to His people, as depicted by Joel (ii. 17-21). Let Peter's hearers only invoke the Lord by name as Redeemer and their salvation was sure ; Rom. x. 13, and 1 Cor. i. 2, make it plain that it is Christ that is meant. The judgment was at hand and those who called upon the name of Jesus,—now exalted to be Lord,—would find themselves safe in the Messianic Kingdom when it should come, having escaped the wrath to come on all unrighteousness, as set forth by Christ's forerunner (Luke iii. 7 and 17). But Peter's idea of the Kingdom widened with time and experience. He became instrumental in leading Gentiles into the Kingdom ; and some think that he lost the leadership of the Church at Jerusalem because of his broadened sympathies. For a considerable time the Jewish Christians found it difficult to be reconciled to the idea of the Kingdom of God being opened to the Gentiles, apart from the observance of Jewish rites.

In his first Epistle, Peter shows a considerable advance on the Christology in Acts. He attains to the conception of the pre-existence of the Messiah or Christ (1 Peter i. 11) whose death secures for the forgiven entrance into the Kingdom of God. He traces the thoughts touched on in our discussion in the " Background of the Apostolic Writings," finding references to Christ and the glories of His Kingdom, in the sayings of Moses and the prophets. The regeneration of all things is at hand. Those who trust in Christ become temples and priests of God, so that the ideal " Kingdom of Priests " is now being realised. It is a Kingdom so wide that

it extends over the dead and the living (1 Peter iii. 19-20). The Spirit of Jesus is supposed to have visited the dead in the interval between His death and Resurrection. The Kingdom of Glory is at hand and Christians must be in a proper frame of mind to receive the King. But when the King delayed to come Peter looked forward to joining Him in glory.

The " Second Epistle of Peter " may be the last written of all the Apostolic writings, and bears the name of Peter. It is placed along with 1 Peter because it resembles it in its teaching. The Kingdom of Jesus Christ appears here, instead of the Kingdom of God of the Gospels. The writer is dealing with those who scoff because the Lord is not returning, and points out that God's measurement of time is very different from ours. A great conflagration is contemplated by means of which a new heaven and a new earth are produced (cf. Isaiah lxv.). This thought is a development of the teaching of Jesus as to the regeneration, and of the predictions of Peter in his discourse in Solomon's porch respecting the restitution of all things. The new heaven and the new earth, which will have passed through the fire, will be inherited only by the righteous. Though there has been delay, the Day of the Lord will come as a surprise to the wicked. But the people of God should not be surprised for they are prepared, ready and waiting, for the earnest expectation and hope ; it is the day of the consummation of their Redemption, the day of Christ and of the everlasting Kingdom of Saints.

The Epistle of Jude closely resembles 2 Peter, expressing the same kind of ideas, and is supposed

to be drawn on by 2 Peter, while itself borrows from the Apocalypse of Enoch and the Assumption of Moses.

The Epistle of James, the brother of our Lord, reminds one of the Sermon on the Mount in which the law of the Kingdom is set forth. The Messiah, whose bondslave James calls himself, is represented as reigning in glory. His Parousia is at hand and the Judge is at the door.

All these Epistles, as well as the sermons or addresses which come under consideration in this group of writings, are highly practical. The Kingdom in view is generally the Kingdom of Glory, but entrance is secured into it by way of reward for diligence in the Kingdom of Grace. Revelation, the last of the group, is not any less practical, though it is typically apocalyptic in its presentation of the Kingdom of God.

In the Apocalypse of John we see pictures of the Kingdom of God—present and future. When the curtain rises and the great Drama opens before our eyes, what we behold is the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the World. Both Kingdoms are in actual existence on the earth. Of Christ it is asserted: "He made us to be a Kingdom" (i. 9). John, the writer, speaks of himself as a "partaker . . . in the tribulation and Kingdom and patience which are in Jesus" (i. 9). In v. 10, Jesus the Lamb of God is described as having purchased, unto God with His blood, "men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and made them to be unto God a Kingdom."

The subjects of this Kingdom are loved of Jesus and by Jesus loosed from their sins, and made priests

to God and conquerors; they are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb and are destined to reign for ever (xxii. 5).

The Kingdom of the World is embodied in the pagan Roman Empire which is to be overcome by the word of the Crucified. The Key-text of Revelation is: "The Kingdom of the World has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (xi. 15).

In the twentieth chapter of this book there is a passage which has given rise to the doctrine of the Millenium—a period in which "Christ will reign in bodily presence upon the earth for a thousand years."

This is the only passage in the Apostolic writings which clearly sets forth the Millenium doctrine. Some interpreters find a reference to a Millenial Kingdom in 1 Cor. xv. 23-24 where Paul seems to distinguish between the Parousia of Christ with the resurrection of the saints and the end when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father. They identify the apparent interval with the period of Christ's reign in Rev. xx. and adduce Phil. iii. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 14-17; Luke xiv. 14, etc., in support of their contention. Briggs in "The Messiah of the Apostles," p. 341ff., and Salmond in his "Christian Doctrine of Immortality," pp. 437ff., 520, 561, go carefully into the matter and find that the other writings of the New Testament do not support the literal interpretation of the Millenial passage in the Apocalypse. See also Titius, "pp. 47 and 48 and Charles' "Eschatology," pp. 389 and 390. Prof. H. A. A. Kennedy's conclusion on this point is, as far as the Pauline writings are concerned:

"Students of Paulinism are not in a position to determine whether the Apostle did or did not hold this conception. But on the basis set before us in our present passage (1 Cor. xv. 23 and 24) we have no hesitation in asserting that it would be most precarious and unwarranted to build up any such theory" ("Paul's Conception of the Last things," p. 322).

The question of the duration of the Messiah's Kingdom on earth was a favourite subject of speculation among the Jews and was variously reckoned as forty, seventy, four hundred, one thousand years. The reckoning of a thousand years was based on a combination of Gen. i. and Psalm xc. 4. Six milleniums of work were to be followed by one of rest. We cannot be certain if the figure in the text rests upon these Jewish speculations, but we are convinced that this figure must fall under the general rule—that all such figures in this book have a symbolical and not a numerical value. In the words of Milligan: "The fundamental principle to be kept clearly and resolutely in view is this—that the thousand years mentioned in this passage express no period of time . . . they embody an idea . . . the idea of perfection."

How the idea of a thousand years' reign arose is thus explained by the most competent of critics and interpreters. Among the Jews there were two beliefs regarding the consummation of the Kingdom of God. The one—that of the older Judaism that history would be wound up by the rule of the Messiah over a purified people and by His victory over all their enemies; the other,—that the new blessed era was to be completely distinguished from

the old. The Messianic rule was to be no longer an earthly rule—it was to consist in a new order whose conditions were supra mundane. These two conceptions were allowed to lie side by side, the more material being favoured by the nationalistically inclined among the Jews, the more spiritual, by the more essentially apocalyptic party. For the sake of compromise the Millenium was conceived. (H. A. A. Kennedy's " Vital Forces," p. 96.)

While the great doctrine of the Second Advent has ever been productive of the best results, the fixing of dates and the speculation about " times or seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority " have been fruitful of much mischief, e.g., in Thessalonia in the first century and in Europe in the Middle Ages. In St. Bernard's " Life and Times " there is a good picture of the beliefs and practices of those days. According to the " Millenium " reckoning the Parousia fell due in the year 1000 A.D. The Council of Trosly announced the awful consummation and all over Christendom business was suspended. Some rich people donated a great deal of property to the Church, as a sort of insurance for the future. Charters of the day conveying this property began —" Fine omnium adpropinquante ruinisque crebescentibus dono," etc. Other people prepared for the end by a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where it was believed the Lord would appear in bodily presence. But the majority abandoned themselves to dissolute revelry, crying : " Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die."

In view of such facts as these, Prof. David Smith holds it is hardly necessary to say " that the idea of

the Millenium is nothing more than an old Jewish fancy. It was a mere allegory," whose perversion, in the way of literal interpretation, he denounces as coarse and stupid obscurantism.

Finally, with regard to the contribution of this fascinating Apocalypse to our subject, it need scarcely be said that the language is highly figurative and that, as we turn the pages of the Book, the Kaleidoscope of Time turns also, presenting to us, at each turn, a different aspect of the Kingdom of God, either in its struggling or perfected condition.

Right through the Apostolic writings we find the thought of the life in the ideal Kingdom of God expressed in terms of the Kingdom, and this is especially true of Revelation, whose conceptions are concrete, taking their colour from the things of the present world. The substance and the secret of the eternal blessedness is already in the possession of the believer though the thought is presented in the form of a shining hope.

Modern writers have poured considerable contempt on the presentation in Revelation of the Kingdom and the Life to come. One writer speaks of the "bric-a-brac heaven of St. John." The angels, archangels, the heavenly host, the New Jerusalem with its golden streets and gate of pearl, the tree of life and the fountains of living waters, are extremely objectionable to these critics. But the Seer has his meaning for his symbols and distinguishes between substance and form. The great discord that appears in his apocalyptic imagery of belief and future blessedness only shows how faithfully he follows the rule of apocalyptic art. He knows the Kingdom of God is so great a subject

that it cannot be described with logical consistency. If it could, as Dr. Leckie so pointedly remarks, "he would have written an essay and not an apocalypse" ("The World to Come," p. 33). Every picture drawn by John is an aspect of the Kingdom which is such a many-sided reality that the succession of pictures required to describe it must be of different colours. We should be much the poorer, if these pictures were replaced by barren abstractions or chilly assertions of ignorance. Remembering, therefore, that we have here inspired poetry in which symbolical truth is to be distinguished from literal truth, we may continue to get from Revelation a message that ever appeals to the simplest mind and also to the wise and understanding.

(2) The Pauline View.

From the Acts of the Apostles we learn that Paul preached the "gospel of the Kingdom." Though the term is seldom used by him, the historian, Luke, tells us that "the Kingdom of God" was the formula under which his preaching and teaching could be put. Clement informs us also that the proclamation of the Coming Kingdom formed the staple of the Apostolic preaching, based on the assurance of the Resurrection of the Lord and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (xlii. 3.)

The use that is made of Ps. cx. in Rom. viii. 34, Eph. i. 20, and Col. iii. 1, suggests that the Apostle Paul believed that Jesus' reign as Messiah had already begun. The Kingdom is present and believers are translated into it (Col. i. 13). By the time the Epistle to the Colossians was written the conflict regarding circumcision was over. But a more serious

fight had to be fought. This Church was in danger so great that Epaphras travelled 1,500 miles to lay the matter before Paul, lying in prison in Rome. Incipient Gnosticism, with its many mediators, of whom it would make Christ one, had insinuated itself into this Christian community. The Apostle dealt with the subject, and the result was that Christ was established in the estimation of all Christians as not *a* mediator but the *only* mediator between God and men. His Kingdom was already established and those exercising faith in Him received then—and not at the end of the age—forgiveness for sin through the merits of His sacrifice (Col. i. 14). What occupied the focus of Paul's mind was faith, not hope. He was sure of reconciliation with God, of forgiveness, of having died and risen with Christ, of the Spirit's fruits which are love, joy and peace. Life in the Christ is, according to this Apostle, the privilege of every Christian man. The effects of the Spirit are themselves a demonstration that the new era has already dawned. Old things have passed away and all things are become new (2 Cor. v. 17). This the Apostle taught, because he lived himself in the possession of a present salvation.

In 1 Cor. iv. 20, Paul declares that " the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power." The context explains that the " power " is present. These words remind us of Jesus' reply to the Pharisees : " The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation " (Luke xvii. 20-21). Here we see the Apostle interpreting the words of Jesus. Similarly, in Rom. xiv. 17, where he writes : " The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink " (the question which had stirred up controversy in the Christian Brotherhood)

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"but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, for he that in this matter serves Christ is well-pleasing to God and approved by men." Serving Christ and membership in the Kingdom are identical. The Kingdom of Paul is present, and, as Prof. Kennedy says: "Perhaps he would call it at its present stage more strictly 'the Kingdom of Christ'"—a fact which would explain the utterance in 1 Cor. xv. 21: "Then the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to His God and Father."

To the Apostle, Christ was the embodiment of the Kingdom. He is in Christ. So are the Corinthian Christians to whom he writes. So also are the Churches (1 Thes. ii. 14, Gal. i. 22). He and they are thus subjects of the Kingdom, for they are all embraced by the personality of the Christ. And in thus identifying, after a certain manner, the Kingdom with the inclusive personality of Christ, Paul is only giving vitality and substance to the sayings in the Synoptics that speak of Jesus in relation to the Father as the ideal Subject and in relation to His followers as the ideal King. So in personal form He is what the Kingdom of God is in a social form. To follow Him is to observe all the moral and religious laws of the Kingdom. In this fact some interpreters find a reason why the Kingdom idea is not so prominent in the Pauline writings—that Christ appears to have taken the place of the Kingdom.

But much as the Apostle enjoyed of the blessings of the Kingdom he looked for still greater redemptive benefits in the age to come. He had only the first fruits and pledge of the blessedness of the

consummated Kingdom. Christ Who had rescued believers from sin would abolish ignorance and pain and death. Paul was redeemed and, therefore, he longed for the perfected redemption (Rom. viii, 14 and xix. 23). In writing to the Romans he could use an *a fortiore* argument : "Much more that now we are justified by His blood shall we be saved by Him from wrath. If we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, when we were enemies, much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 9, seq.). The Kingdom is future as well as present, as in the teaching of Jesus.

With regard to the future and the consummation of the Kingdom of God the Pauline writings contain no group of "logically related and coherent conceptions." His ideas on these things appear and re-appear under a varying dress of imagery.

St. Paul looked for the Second Coming of Our Lord and the consummation of the Kingdom of God in his own generation. He expected it even in his own lifetime : "We the living who survive till He comes" (1 Thes. iv. 15). From 1 Cor. xv. 51 we gather that he believed that many of the Corinthians to whom he is writing would also be alive. He does not profess to know the day or the hour, but he is certain that the End will come and he testifies that it will come suddenly and unexpectedly like a thief in the night (1 Thes. v. 2). Later on, as he writes to the Corinthians, he contemplates the possibility that he may die before Christ has come. He desires to survive but the hope is precarious, and so he detaches faith from it and rises exultantly to the assurance that when death comes that will mean for him an immediate

passage into the presence of Christ. At one time Paul seems to have believed that when the soul passed from the body it experienced an interval of sleep: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thes. iv. 14). Later, as the Parousia conception became less prominent, the interval of waiting vanished and death was followed immediately by the enjoyment of the presence of the Lord. But whether he lived or died he was sure the End was at hand. In Romans xiii. 11, he speaks of salvation being "nearer to us now than when we first believed." In Philippians, later still, he expresses the desire to depart and be with Christ (Chap. i. 23), combined with the attitude of expectancy "We look for the Saviour from heaven." The belief that Christ might return to earth at any moment was universal in the Apostolic Church, and, as we shall see in our discussion of the early Church as a partial embodiment of the Kingdom of God, as well as an instrument for its realisation, that belief served a good purpose in those momentous days. The belief arose from a strong tendency to the concrete in the Jewish mind, steeped in Apocalyptic literature such as the Sibylline Oracles and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. It is difficult to say how much Christian thought was leavened by ideas derived from such sources. But that they exercised a certain influence upon the eschatology of the Gospels and the Epistles—as set forth in the Apocalyptic discourses and statements—cannot reasonably be gainsaid. The colours of the Apocalyptic tradition are very evident in Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians and

in 1 Corinthians xv., where he paints a picture of the Lord's return—a picture on which Prof. Moffatt comments thus in the Expositors' Greek Testament, vol. iii. 38: "With much scenic and realistic details, drawn from the heterogeneous eschatology of the later Judaism, Paul seeks to make intelligible to his own mind, and to that of his readers, the profound truth that neither death nor any cosmic crisis in the future will make any essential difference to the close relation between the Christian and his Lord."

In 2 Thes. ii. 1-12, the Apostle refers to certain events which must take place before the Parousia. The passage is unparalleled in his writings. The teaching in it, if the great consummation were meant, would be found out of harmony with Paul's understanding of what the situation immediately before that event or combination of events will be, as indicated in the great Epistle to the Romans where the foretokens of the end are not the intensification of sin but the victorious advance of grace—the successful proclamation of the Gospel to the heathen and the conversion of even the stubborn Jews. Here we see predicted a great apostasy—a personal Anti-Christ or man of sin or lawlessness, usurping the place of God and, as a kind of Satanic Messiah, incorporating all forms of iniquity. At present there is a restraint on "the man of lawlessness" but the restraint will be removed with dire results. Then suddenly the Lord Jesus will appear and slay this embodiment of evil "with the breath of His mouth."

A volume could be written on the history of the many views taken by interpreters of this most

perplexing passage. The views that find in the "man of lawlessness" Mahomet or the Pope, or Caligula or Nero are ruled out as being based on a mistaken conception of prophecy as "history written before the event." The interpretation that finds most support, though it is not free from its difficulties, is, that the persecuting Jewish authorities are personified in the one malignant enemy. The Jews were Paul's great opponents in Thessalonia and the instigators of the persecution of the Christians of that city. The use of the present tense favours the contention that the reference is to some contemporary person or power. So does the fact of the restraining influence. And that the Jewish authorities are meant seems to be implied in the reference to the "temple of God" which is clearly the temple in Jerusalem. Paul at this stage could scarcely use of a Roman Emperor the words "Setting himself forth as a God," but we can well imagine him figuratively writing thus of the dogmatic assumption of the Jews to judge and condemn all who differed from them. Then, at the time there was a restraint exercised over the persecuting Jews which was removed at the time of Hadrian when the revolt under Bar Cochba led to the overthrow of the Roman Government for a time in Palestine and the persecution of the Christians in that district. But there are several things still left obscure. When, however, we are dealing with Apocalyptic language we can hardly expect everything to be plain. The origin of the phraseology is the Book of Daniel, and we might reasonably expect here the enemy of Christianity to mean some particular person, as

Antiochus Epiphanes was meant by Daniel, but the "man of lawlessness" of the passage corresponds undoubtedly to the Anti-Christ of John. And there is reason to believe that John used the term generally for any violent opponent of Christ. This is the sense in which we should take the term "man of lawlessness," as used by the Apostle Paul. A fulfilment of his words we find already mentioned in the reign of Hadrian when a Jew of the name of Bar Cochba led a revolt against Rome and pretended to be the Messiah. Bar Cochba, as the false Messiah of those days, when he was temporarily successful in his opposition to the restraining influence of Rome, showed no mercy to the Christians, scourging and killing every one who refused to blaspheme the name of Jesus; and there was an apostasy, to some extent. But in the year 135 the war ended, amid fearful massacres of Jewish men and women. In the language of Apocalyptic, the Divine Presence was there in the person of the Roman army and the Divine breath slew the "man of lawlessness." Jerusalem was taken and destroyed, and Jews were forbidden to enter it under pain of death. The Christians who came to dwell there elected an uncircumcised bishop. The last thread binding Christianity to Talmudism was broken—a very important step forward by the Christian Church, a real Parousia of Our Lord.

The majority of the references to the Kingdom of God in the Pauline Epistles are to the consummated Kingdom of Glory. The passages which speak of inheriting the Kingdom are also of the same nature, such as: "Know ye not that unrighteous men shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 9).

Similar to this are Rom. viii. 17, Gal. v. 21, Eph. v. 5, and 1 Cor. xv. 50. The last of these passages, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" clearly indicates the sense in which the Apostle uses the term—meaning the era of a new order of spiritual existence.

This new era is introduced by the personal Parousia of the Lord; and this Parousia results in two great events necessary to the final and perfect establishment of the Kingdom of God—resurrection and judgment. The process of final redemption is set forth by the Apostle in his description of these events. A vivid and most impressive account of the Parousia occurs in 1 Thes. iv. The resurrection of believers at the End is treated in 1 Cor. xv. Paul's conception of the Judgment we gather from passages in different Epistles.

Doubts had been expressed in the Corinthian Church regarding either a personal survival of death or the idea of a bodily resurrection. The Apostle starts in his reply with the resurrection of Jesus, for he considers it all-important, the *sine qua non* of the Christian Church, and assumes that what holds true of Him is also predicable of His people. He builds up his argument with analogies from Nature. Jesus, rising from the grave, he holds, has made the resurrection of Christians quite certain: "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep" . . . "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (vv. 20-23). And this will take place at the Parousia.

Paul attaches great importance to the new spiritual body in which believers are to be clad, and

antagonises the crass notions of popular Judaism. In 1 Cor. xv. 37, he definitely states that the body laid in the grave will not be raised up; flesh and blood cannot enter the perfected Kingdom of God. He is equally opposed to the Hellenic conception of the immortality of the soul apart from a body. Between the Jewish view—that the present physical organism will share in the resurrection—and the Greek doctrine of disembodiment, the Apostle took up a middle position by shaping his grand conception of a new spiritual body, now prepared for us in heaven (2 Cor. ii. 1), like the risen body of Our Lord. This body is the creation of the Spirit and is adequate to the need of the new life in the consummated Kingdom. It is a body of glory—of radiance and grandeur and power. For the Christian to receive this body is to reach the last stage in his development by which he is fitted for the higher services and privileges of the Kingdom of Glory. The resurrection is effected by the power of the new life in Christ, mediated by the Spirit dwelling in the believers, so that in this important chapter of 1 Cor. the apostle is thinking only of believers. In Rom. ii. 16, he, however, emphatically states that all men will be judged, and so those of them who are in their graves will require to pass to the throne of Judgment through the gates of resurrection.

Immediately connected with the Resurrection is the Judgment in which God will "render to every man according to his works" (Rom. ii. 5). In some passages we find God represented as the Judge, in others, Christ. The apparent contradiction is explained by the words: "God shall judge the

secrets of man by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 16). The judgment of the true believers ends in full redemption. The lot of unbelievers is painted without elaboration or reserve as "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might" (2 Thes. i. 9).

When this stage is reached the apostle sees the last enemy, death, overcome and all forces opposed to Christ and His followers rendered powerless. He sees the world-plan realised in Christ, the Eternal Son of God, who became incarnate, accomplished redemption, overcame sin and death, and was exalted to God's right hand to claim universal adoration (Phil. ii. 9-10). As the inferior stages of existence are summed up in man who stands at the head of all earthly creation and forms the "first link between the natural and the spiritual, so are all stages of humanity summed up in Christ who, in His person as God-Man, links the creation absolutely with God" (Orr's "Christian View," page 284. Cf. Eph. i. 10, Col. i. 15-19). There is now perfect harmony between the head and the members, for the life of Christ circulates uninterruptedly through them all. They have attained to the measure of the fulness of Christ (Eph. iv. 13). Christ is all and in all (Col. iii. 11), and thus the Father's purpose is crowned as far as the human race is concerned. But not only so; there is also an end to the groans of creation, and there appears a "transformed and glorified universe in which that which has been imperfect shall be done away" (Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 31 and Rom. viii. 19-21). Then, finally, the apostle sees the mediatorial functions of Christ ended and the Kingdom of Grace, which was

Christ's by God's gift and power, delivered to His God and Father, that God who had subordinated all things to Him, might be all in all. "Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we unto Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through Him" (1 Cor. viii. 6).

(3) The View of Hebrews.

This Epistle was written to convince sorely tried Jewish Christians that the new covenant (viii. 8) mediated by Christ is a perfect and eternal consummation of the faulty and evanescent covenant that spoke of fellowship between God and His people.

The Keynote of the Epistle is—"a Kingdom which cannot be shaken." This Kingdom is practically identical with "the city with foundations," whose designer is God and for which Abraham looked (xi. 10). It is the city of the living God, Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the general assembly of the first-born, enrolled in heaven. The subjects of the Kingdom are "holy brethren" who are under the spell of Him who is the pioneer of faith and is not ashamed to call them brethren. They have already tasted the powers of the age to come and the rest (the "Kingdom" expressed in Jewish figurative language) which remains for the people of God. The Kingdom is present and future. The references are ii. 5, vi. 5, xiii. 14, and xii. 28. The majority of these are to the consummated Kingdom.

There is an extensive use made of Old Testament Scriptures in this Epistle, as the writer was anxious to impress upon his readers the fact that God, who

had ruled the history therein recorded and had been the one great Causality who communicated Himself to men and convinced them of His purpose to found a perfect "Kingdom of God," had fulfilled His promise and purpose in Jesus Christ. The world to come, to which reference is made, meant to the Jews the world under the reign of the Messiah, and it is already in a sense come. It has not come in its perfect form, but it has projected itself into the present, showing some of the beauty and order of eternity amid the chaos of time. It is rendering obsolete the temporary and symbolic things of the Old Dispensation, and is gradually realising itself in the regeneration of men and in the destruction of things inimical to human progress.

This writer, like the Apostolic writers generally, finds the end in the beginning. As Paul discovered Christianity in the Abrahamic Covenant, the author of Hebrews sees Moses "enduring the reproach of the Messiah." According to the traditional ideal "the world to come" was to be one in which Hebrews and those who would associate with them would be triumphant and free. "Yes," says this writer, "but not the Jew only but man, whoever he may be, can be free and supreme amid the conditions now introduced in the new era." The Messiah had made this possible by His assumption of human nature. He had become man, because He wanted to save not angels but men, and He could only save them by suffering for them death on the Cross and by triumphing over death. Thus only could the works of the devil be destroyed and the fear of death that enslaved men be removed from their hearts. The Messiah was Lord of the "world to

come" and had opened a way for all who cared to follow Him into that world or Kingdom that no power or evil could shake.

(4) The Johannine View.

The ideas of Messiah and Kingdom of God meant to Jesus' mind infinitely more than the names could be made to signify. He put into them a content that filled them to overflowing. He was not satisfied with them as they could not express all the thoughts which He wished to teach regarding the relation of men to God and to one another. So, He used other terms in addition to these; and His Apostles followed His example. But notwithstanding the process of replacing and transmuting the most primitive conceptions seen in all the Apostolic writings, there still remains in the teaching of these writings, even in the most highly developed —the Johannine—not only the original Synoptic ideas but even their very phraseology.

In Chapters I and IV of the Fourth Gospel we find the title Messiah; and in the third chapter there occurs twice the term, Kingdom of God, in the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus. There Jesus points out that only those who undergo a radical change, figuratively described as a new birth, can enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom of God ("see"—enjoy. Cf. Luke iii. 26, Heb. xi. 5, Acts ii. 27, 1 Peter iii. 10). This implies that more than intellectual culture is required. Why this change? He goes on to explain. Before one can enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom of God one must secure entrance into it, and that is possible only

to those who are so operated upon by the Holy Spirit that they renounce their past sinful lives—receiving baptism as the outward symbol of the inward change of heart—spirit and tastes. The condition of entrance and enjoyment is a matter of character, not of racial connection. The implication, therefore, is that the Kingdom is both spiritual and universal. More is taught as to the nature of the Kingdom in Jesus' answer to Pilate's question, recorded in the eighteenth chapter. His Kingdom is not of this world; it is unlike the kingdoms of the world. It is from God. It is, therefore, according to the Fourth Gospel, spiritual and universal. It is also present, and may be entered through baptism which is the seal of the Spirit's operation in the Soul.

In the tenth chapter we come upon a most interesting figure—that of the Good Shepherd. The comparison of the King with a shepherd is an old conception. It is seen in the inscriptions of Sargon II, before the end of the eighth century B.C. Homer often applied the title "Shepherd of the People" to Agamemnon, and in the time and circle of David, King of Israel, the use of the term as a royal title was already widespread. The Messiah is described as a Shepherd in the Psalms of Solomon—a title which belongs to His Kingly office. There is an interesting parallel in the Book of Enoch—"The Prince and Ruler of the Sheep" (xvii. 15). Hence the title of the Good Shepherd applied to Our Lord in this chapter is to be interpreted as a Messianic title of long standing. Royal authority belongs to the loving Shepherd described there. Then, when Jesus says: "Ye believe not because

ye are not My sheep," He is simply saying that His hearers did not belong to His Kingdom.

The figure of the Shepherd is not less apocalyptic than that of the Son of Man in the Synoptic Gospels, and the pastoral office of the Messiah supplied our Lord with some of His most characteristic expressions. But, apocalyptic as it was, it was one that would have appealed with great force to Greeks acquainted with the words of Homer ; and it was for Greeks, in the first instance, that the Fourth Gospel was composed.

In the Johannine writings, as in the rest of the Apostolic writings, we find that the Kingdom of God is future as well as present. That is to say, there is a Parousia of Our Lord when the Kingdom will be consummated. " If I will that he tarry till I come," etc. (John xxi. 22). In the Supper discourse also this idea occurs : " If I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself " (xiv. 3).

In the first Epistle we read : " Abide in Him that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming " (ii. 28). Here also the activity of false prophets is interpreted as a sign of the approaching end (ii. 18). In the Gospel both the resurrection and the judgment preliminary to the great consummation are mentioned (v. 28, vi.).

Some critics maintain that this vein of eschatological thought is not so much a conscious concession to tradition on the part of St. John as evidence of his failure to rid himself entirely of the less spiritual elements in the popular faith. But it is more likely that he meant his eschatology very seriously. His fellowship with God was close, but

death and sin were still facts. The hostility of the world was very real. Much required to be done before that enmity could be overcome. Though apocalyptic categories in a measure disappeared,—for example, the anticipation of a glorified earth—this evangelist and interpreter parts with no vital element of the Christian hope. Christ is not merely expected ; He is known. He is not merely the Coming One ; He is present. Death is not merely to be destroyed ; it is destroyed already. The Kingdom of God is not merely coming ; it is here already. " That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ " (1 John i. 3). The Kingdom of God is truly here, and here with a purpose—" The fellowship of men with God and with one another in love."

CHAPTER V

Variants of the Kingdom of God

(1) The Conception of the Family

In the teaching of Jesus, as recorded in the Synoptics, the term Kingdom of God does not embrace the breadth and length of His revelation. Again and again He uses the idea of the family to express the highest relationship between God and men. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him" (Matt. vii. 11). One can enter the Kingdom of God only by becoming as a little child (Matt. xviii. 3). Those who believe on Him become His brethren (Matt. xii. 48), and those who make sacrifices for His sake will have a large family circle (Mark x. 30). He taught His disciples to address God as Father and exhorted them to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. v. 48). In the Parable of the Prodigal Son the sinner is represented as lost to the family of God and then restored (Luke xv. 11).

In the Johannine writings this idea is common. The new community is one "born again" and becomes a child of God. The new relationship is brought about by Christ who invites all entering the new community into a family where He Himself is the animating spirit and uniting force. In the

First Epistle of John we read: "Now we are the children of God" (iii. 1-4). In the Epistle of James we have the words: "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth" (i. 17-18). Peter speaks of believers in similar terms, as "new-born babes" (1 Peter i. 3-10). Paul makes a considerable use of this figure. Believers are regarded as a new creation. For the spiritual child he claims its privilege: "If children, then heirs of God," etc. This is the spirit of adoption whereby they cry "Abba Father." These are the children who constitute God's family, have the guidance of the Holy Spirit and are called "holy brethren." In the gift of the Holy Spirit this Apostle sees an earnest of what in Hebrews and by Peter is described as the "inheritance" or the Kingdom which it is the Father's good pleasure to give to His children. Prof. Kennedy ("Theology of the Epistles," p. 106) says: "We are not unduly pressing the data when we assert that for Paul the conception of the family as established and knit together in Christ takes the place of the Kingdom"; and in support of this contention he quotes Galatians iii. 26, iv. 4-7, in which he finds everything of moment in Paul's experience expressed—incarnation, redemption, the Holy Spirit, the relation of Sonship, and the right to the completed inheritance. The close connection between the conceptions of the Kingdom and the family is also shown by Robertson Smith and Titius.

(2) The Conception of Salvation.

The idea of salvation was closely connected in the minds of the Jewish people with that of the

Kingdom of God. In the Apostolic writings we find the Kingdom interpreted as Salvation. That this thought was present to Jesus' hearers is indicated by the question, "Are there few that be saved ? " (Luke xiii. 23). The parable of the Sower and of the Barren Fig-Tree and the lamentation over Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, showing that in those important centres His message had been rejected, point to the conclusion that few indeed were in the way of salvation or savingly interested in the Kingdom.

In the earliest Books of the Old Testament salvation means deliverance from physical danger (Judges xv. 18, 1 Sam. xi. 9-13 etc.). Next, the term refers to the deliverance of the nation (Exodus xiv. 13 etc.). The transition to the deliverance associated with the Messiah is easy. That deliverance was understood to imply, first, the realisation of the lower form of Jewish Messianic expectation—as in Pss. of Sol. x. 9, xii. 7. Testaments, etc., Luke i. 69-71 ; second, as embracing the higher form of the Christian hope as in Acts iv. 12, xiii. 26 etc. In the latter sense salvation has two aspects—negative and positive. The negative aspect implies rescue from the wrath under which the whole world is lying ; the positive, the impartation of eternal life. The two aspects are combined in some passages, for example, 1 Thess. v. 9-10.

Jesus—also His Forerunner—came preaching the Kingdom of God. His Apostles, who knew His mind and felt they were not mere echoes of Him but interpreting voices guided by His Spirit, varied His language to suit their hearers, for circumstances had been changed by the death and resurrection of

their Master. They went accordingly proclaiming the good news of salvation instead of the Kingdom, because they knew that Jesus was the Christ and Saviour. Crass ideas were entertained with regard to salvation as in respect to the Kingdom of God. Some thought of salvation as deliverance from the tyranny of Rome ; others, from the slavery of sin. As a variant of the Kingdom in the early teaching of the Apostles, we find it, at first, conceived eschatologically rather than as an essentially spiritual experience, as an outward rather than an inward state. The judgment and the consummation of all things or the establishment of the perfect Kingdom of God were associated in the minds of the Apostles. The thought that the Crucified One was to be their Judge pierced Peter's hearers to the heart and terrified them so that they cried out, " What shall we do that we may be saved ? " What, to escape the wrath against the enemies of the King and be saved in the Kingdom ? A change of attitude towards Jesus as the Messiah and dissociation from the collective action of the nation in rejecting and crucifying Him were necessary. This change of heart was shown openly by submitting to baptism in the name of Jesus as the Christ. Baptism also meant that the baptised were dead to the past as well as in a new relationship to God in Christ. This was a condition of acceptance in the perfected Kingdom which was about to come. The gift of the Holy Spirit at baptism was the seal that sins were forgiven, an earnest of the believers' full possession of the inheritance of the Kingdom of God. Forgiveness or justification was thus taught as the simple condition of salvation which was based upon

the merits of Jesus' death, and appropriated by faith. It was soon realised that the salvation was present and not something to be received at the Judgment. Its presence was evident in the change of life and character seen among believers. Salvation, therefore, like the Kingdom, was both present and future. The perfect salvation would come when all enemies were overcome—including death and the powers of evil—and believers were brought into the fulness of the joy of a Divine Presence in Glory.

(3) The Conception of Righteousness.

Closely associated with salvation is righteousness which, in the estimation of St. Paul at least, is an equivalent for the Kingdom of God.

In Jewish religious circles of the time of Jesus and St. Paul the question of how to get right with God and continue so, was one that exercised the minds of many. The burden of the law's requirements was felt to be more than they could bear. The path of obedience to it was the only one that led to righteousness and salvation—God's reward on the great day of reckoning was for services done on the earth. The righteous man would be then declared righteous or justified and the unrighteous condemned. The righteousness of the average man was seen to be deplorably defective, needing to be supplemented before he could ever hope for a place in the consummated Kingdom. Thus arose the idea that the "surplus merit of notably pious individuals" might be reckoned to those who could feel no confidence about their own. Holtzman lays stress on the conception "that the suffering of

another as well as his special merit could atone for transgression." (Prof. H. A. A. Kennedy's "The Theology of the Epistles," p. 22.) This conception we find in Jewish literature from an early date, becoming very prominent in Deutero-Isaiah in the chapters dealing with the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. It is developed in the Apostolic writings, especially in the Pauline—where the words of Jesus show their influence on every page—"For, verily, the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45, Matt. xx. 28). Jesus is seen to have played the part of the Suffering Servant and to have secured righteousness for all who believe on Him as the Messiah and to have opened for them the gates of the Kingdom of God.

To the Apostle Paul the counterpart of the Kingdom of God was: "It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. i. 16). He understood the Messianic Kingdom to be the culmination of a process always going on—the reign of God and the sum of all the influences that specially betokened the presence and manifestation of God. It meant the coming of forces and energies into human life, the effect of which was righteousness whose fruit were joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.

The righteousness that man needs must, like the Kingdom, come from God (Phil. iii. 8-9). It embraces justice, faithfulness and sympathy. What it really means can only be understood, as in the case of the Kingdom, in the light of the Old Testament and God's relation to His covenant people. The intimacy between God and Israel is

one of the brightest strains in the Jewish Scriptures. This Paul appreciated as a Pharisee and much more as a Christian. It was natural then that he should use Old Testament conceptions to express what he felt Christ had done for the world. Was the history of the Chosen People not the working of righteousness, and was not Christianity the supreme expression of that righteousness? Yes, it was the righteousness of God that called it into being so that it became "the power of God unto salvation" to all believers. It sought a reflection of itself in the life and character of men; and justification and sanctification are but the technical terms for the beginning and continuation of the process by means of which that end may be realised. The righteousness of God is not passive, but active. *It is God at work in the World.* The Kingdom may be described in similar terms. For if God asserts His sovereignty it must be in the form of righteousness which, as the pages of the Old Testament show, had its element of love or sympathy in the Old Dispensation. Both the righteousness and the Kingdom are of God and are conceptions we find in the Jewish Scriptures, the Kingdom idea running vigorously from 1 Sam. to Daniel, while that of righteousness is prominent in Isaiah and the Psalms. In both terms the central and cardinal thought is that of the Divine love and goodness actively intervening to bring the children of men into "fellowship with God and with one another in love." In using the term "righteousness" instead of "Kingdom" the Apostle did not alter the teaching of Jesus. Weizacker puts the case for all the Apostles in their use of variants when he writes thus of Paul: "He did not thereby create

anything new within Christianity itself. He only, as it were, translated the teaching of Jesus into the language necessary for promoting the work. By this very means the object of the Founder was fulfilled" (Apostolic Age ii. 273).

(4) The Conception of Life.

As, generally speaking, the Synoptics present the Christian good as the Kingdom of God, and the Pauline Epistles as the righteousness of God, so the Johannine writings describe it as life or eternal life.

This conception, however, is not unknown to the Synoptic Gospels. In Matt. xviii. Jesus describes the blessings He is bringing into the world as life or eternal life. In Matt. xix. 16, xx. 16, there is evidently a transition from the use of the term Kingdom to the use of the word life. The rich young ruler is concerned about the means of inheriting eternal life (Matt. xix. 16, Mark x. 17, Luke xviii. 18); and so is the lawyer who asks the question about the greatest commandment (Luke x. 25). It was known to the Jews like the other variants of the Kingdom. In the Old Testament it meant fellowship with God; and it was this thought of fellowship with God, so closely connected with the Kingdom of God, as we have seen, which led to the conception of life immortal and the idea of a resurrection. No definition was required for it any more than for the Kingdom of God. But, as in the case of the Kingdom idea, the Fourth Gospel makes a great addition to the current conception when it says: "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent," and makes

that life spring from Christ (John vi. 35, x. 10, xi. 25, xiv. 6). This life, as Dr. R. J. Drummond says, is " the possession in growing perfection of all the faculties and powers, especially those that are moral and spiritual, with which God endows men. Their consecration to God's service, and their delegated use for this end, is the way in which He designed men to use them. It is life as Christ lived it and gave it, life within the limits and under the conditions of the Kingdom of God " (" Apostolic Teaching and Christ's Teaching," p. 194). Several parables were spoken by our Lord throwing light on this life, such as the Seed Growing Secretly, the Sower, the Tares, the Grain of Mustard Seed, the Leaven, the New Wine, and the Barren Fig-Tree—all showing how much a matter of life the Kingdom of God is. There are also parables which explain the origin and continuance of the life of those in union with Christ, and show that a healthy product cannot be obtained in a set of isolated units, but only in a corporate whole with a common life. Life corporate, as well as individual, characterises the result contemplated by God in Christ in respect to humanity. So that " life " or " eternal life " may be taken as an equivalent for the " Kingdom of God."

This term meets us throughout the New Testament. In the Apocalypse, with all its dreams and pictures of the Messianic Kingdom, we see what is emphasised and finally looked to, is, not the introduction of the Kingdom of God, so much as the Christian's achievement of eternal life. The great reward to him that overcometh is " to eat of the tree of life " and to wear the " crown of life." In the Pauline

Epistles we have observed how Paul had grasped the idea that the Kingdom of God was in Christ and that the life of the Kingdom was enjoyed through Christ—that, in fact, the life and activity, not only of the individual Christian but also of the Christian Community, were in Him. But when we turn to the Johannine writings we discover that the idea of life characterises them. In these writings there is a marked tendency to transcend the Apocalyptic-Kingdom element of the original Christian tradition. In place of it John uses " eternal life " which is a qualitative rather than a quantitative conception, referring to the character more than to the duration of the life ; and this life is set forth as the actual experience, here and now, of Christ's blessings, on the part of all who trust Him. That is, the life is like the Kingdom of God, a present reality. We have seen that a strong apocalyptic element still remains in the Fourth Gospel, and it is probable John meant very seriously his eschatology expressed in apocalyptic language. It is possible then that the term " life " instead of " Kingdom " appears so frequently in this Gospel, not because the writer discards the Apocalyptic, but because he is reporting conversations of Jesus with individuals and not addresses to assemblies of people for whom the term Kingdom—so expressive of social life—would be more appropriate. It is the personality of the King and the life that the subjects of the Kingdom have in Him, that receive prominence here. John's object is, as Prof. Humphries emphasises in his " Fourth Gospel," p. 7—" To exhibit the Jesus of History as the Divine Logos manifested in human form under the

conditions of time" whose miracles are an outward manifestation of the inner glory, valuable because they shed light upon the King's person. So with the many conversations recorded—they reveal Him as the source of spiritual life and all the blessings that the believer receives and enjoys. The glory of Christ is not something to be revealed; it was manifested in His career on earth as the Giver of Life (John i. 14). But it was not merely a past fact. The glory has rather been released from the limitations of space and time by His triumph over death, so that, in consequence, His resurrection in a measure removes the Parousia from the centre of interest. According to the Synoptic announcements, made immediately prior to the Crucifixion, Jesus was to be re-united to His followers, after a short interval, in circumstances of public splendour and glory. John suggests that this Parousia has already come, that by the resurrection Christ came to His people, as exalted Lord, to remain with them in uninterrupted fellowship (xiv. 18-25). The actual Parousia is in the inspiring and revealing power of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers to whom the blessings of redemption are mediated by Our Lord's death and invisible advent.

The "eternal life" is enjoyed here and now. Even the judgment is already come and is going on continually. Men's destiny is being determined by their attitude to Christ. "He that believeth not hath been judged already" (iii. 18). "He that heareth My word . . . cometh not unto judgment" (iii. 24). The resurrection also is present. The believer is passed from death unto life. There is a sense in which for him the resurrection is past:

"The hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (v. 25). May this thought not be the key to the passage in Revelation about the first resurrection?

This LIFE is present and the condition of entrance into it is the same as for entering the Kingdom of God (John iii. 1-5, and Luke xviii. 18-30). It is also future like the Kingdom. For this Life, communicated through faith, overcomes death, and is the pre-condition of resurrection, as already taught by Paul. The resurrection, in the eschatological sense, is the completion of the process by which life, flowing from Christ, takes possession of the whole nature of the believer, fitting him for the realm of light and life in the glory land.

Finally, it may be said that there are some other variants of the Kingdom of God of which little is said in the New Testament. These—such as "the truth," substituted for the Kingdom by Jesus before Pilate, and "the fold" which in some passages in the Fourth Gospel is synonymous with "the Kingdom" and mediates between the Kingdom and the Church—we must pass over. They are interesting and suggestive, but we must now take up the consideration of the principle variant of the Kingdom,—the Christian Church—which best illustrates how the Kingdom of God ideal was interpreted by the Apostles. Before doing so a general observation or two may be made.

After reading some scores of works on this great subject the writer is convinced there are few, if any, subjects which theologians and those who are not theologians have handled, on which a greater variety

of views have been taken than on the subject of the Kingdom of God. The student who experiences difficulty in having a clear idea as to what is meant by the phrase in the Jewish and Apostolic writings finds his confusion worse confounded as he reads through much of the " Kingdom " literature. Even some of the greatest scholars seem to allow themselves to become the victims of phrases. They assert, for example, that Christ " inherited a moral and spiritual Ideal of the Kingdom " and then proceed to write as if there had never been " a kingdom of God " till the beginning of the Christian era. In a recent publication, " Evangelism in the Modern World," the contributors to which are experts, the writer of the Chapter on " The Kingdom of God in Evangelism " says : " The Kingdom of God was 'here' from the day when Christ appeared." It was " here " then embodied and concentrated in all its perfection and beauty—a power-house of spiritual energy from which issued and was made available, as never before in the history of sinful man, forces capable, if only used, of establishing the Kingdom of God perfectly among the whole human race. But the Kingdom of God had been " here," long before the Incarnation, in the minds and writings of inspired poets and prophets, and was more or less perfectly realised in the lives of believers.

From the time Jehovah came to be regarded as Supreme Sovereign—and of this we learn in the earliest Jewish writings—and people worshipped Him and lived in loving fellowship with one another, " the Kingdom of God " existed, not merely as an ideal, but also as a reality. Was the Sweet Singer

of Israel, who could say: "The Lord is my Shepherd" ("King"), and who experienced the grace of God in fellowship with God and his co-workers, not in the Kingdom? What of him who could say: "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast held me by the right hand; Thou shalt guide me with Thy Counsel and afterwards receive me into glory?" (Ps. lxxiii.). What about them that "feared the Lord and spake one to another; and the Lord hearkened and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and thought on His name"? (Mal. iii. 16). In plain language is the Kingdom of God not religion in our sense of that term? Is this beautiful ideal with its two aspects—the one toward God and eternity and the other toward man and time—not a poetic expression of experience and hope in the sphere of religion and morality? It is "the rule and realm of God in the hearts and lives of men"; it is the "fellowship of men with God and with one another in love"—a conception that runs through the whole Old Testament and the inter-canonical writings. It is the picture of the perfect life, more or less dimly seen, and more or less perfectly realised; and it was there in the Childhood of the Race under what we may call the Jewish Dispensation of Law and Grace in its Dawn. Grace was there, as well as Law, for the pre-existent Christ, as the "Angel of the Lord," was there,—"the spiritual Rock" that followed the Chosen People in the wilderness and throughout the centuries of that Dispensation. There was ever the forward look towards the Messianic Age, the era of perfection. And in 26 A.D., when Jesus

Christ began His public ministry, there came the Day of that age or Dispensation of Grace and Law ; and with His death, resurrection, and the gift of the Holy Spirit the meridian splendour of the New Day arrived. The Kingdom of God appeared in Christ in its perfect form. In Him we see what life ought to be and what life will be when the perfected Kingdom will have come. By submitting to Him and coming under His sway we get the influences of the New Dispensation to play upon us and are fitted for the consummated Kingdom, when this Dispensation introduced by Christ will terminate, and the Kingdom of God be perfectly established and God becomes all and in all.

The Coming of Christ at the beginning of our era was not the beginning of religion or the Kingdom of God but rather what He expresses in the words : " I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly " (John x. 10). The old ideal and the old realisation of it He filled with life so that all that was obsolete and unworthy fell away. And thus He gave an infinite impulse to the cause of religion or the Kingdom of God. The early members of the Kingdom were meant to be a blessing to all nations. The Kingdom tarried because they did not accomplish what they might have done under their Dispensation. But the suffering love of God in Christ will surely make its members move and work for God and humanity under the New Dispensation. If not, nothing will.

PART III

The Kingdom of God and the Christian Church

CHAPTER VI

Introduction

"Jesus foretold the Kingdom and it was the Church that came" (Loisy). Wherever we find men believing in God as their heavenly Father and cherishing towards Him the spirit of Sonship and towards their fellow men the spirit of brotherhood, the Kingdom of God is there, manifesting itself in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17).

Great thoughts stirring great souls have expressed themselves in great movements and have become organising principles of new societies. Of such thoughts by far the greatest is the thought of the Kingdom of God as taught in the Jewish scriptures, —canonical and non-canonical. It is an idea too large for the human mind to grasp except in aspects and partial views which no powers of combination will enable us adequately to adjust. It is, in a sense, an "ideal hovering in heavenly purity above all earthly realities . . . an inspiration coming not with observation, and having its seat in the heart" (Bruce). But ideals crave an embodiment, and the Church is the concrete expression of this Kingdom, ideal amid the limitations of time and space. The very phrase, "the Kingdom of God," is suggestive of society and finds a ready response from the social instinct of man, so powerful in religion.

"The idea of the Church as a Christian Society was due to the teaching of our Lord" (Seely). Jesus' teaching as to the Fatherhood of God and the consequent Brotherhood of Man would of itself, without any initiative action on His part, have led to the formation of a Society of those accepting His teaching and taking Him for their Master. But our Lord wished to be recognised as the Founder of such a Society, of the members of which it would be true that "where they went was the Kingdom of God as where He went" (Matthews—"Messianic Hope") and that they would ultimately transform human society into a great Brotherhood of love and service and trust in God. Hence, early in His public ministry, as we gather from Mark—our earliest Gospel—He chose twelve disciples, giving them a special training for their better understanding of His mission in the world. And whenever these disciples were sufficiently prepared to receive the intimation of His intention in this connection, it was revealed. For *when* at Cæsarea-Philippi, in answer to our Lord's question, "But who say ye that I am?", Peter—speaking not only for himself but also for the other disciples—replied: "Thou art the Christ," *then* Jesus made the great announcement: "Blessed art thou Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build *My* Church; the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed

in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 17-19). That Jesus was understood to have had the Kingdom of God in view at the time, and was in a sense identifying it with the coming Society, is indicated by the words in the Odes of Solomon xxii. 12—"That the foundation of everything might be Thy rock and on it Thou didst build Thy Kingdom."

The passage in Matthew, just quoted, along with Matt. xviii. 17 are the only references to the Church in the Gospels. Matt. xviii. 17 seems to point to the local congregation, so that Matt. xvi. 18 is the only explicit allusion to the Church in the records of the teaching of Jesus. On this account the text has been assailed by critics and is said to be a reflection of the experience of the Church in later days. It is alleged that the passage was inserted in order to support the growing authority of the Church as an external power. But Hort in his excellent work, "The Christian Ecclesia," holds that "the manner in which St. Peter's name enters into the language about the building of the Messiah's ecclesia could not be produced by any view respecting his office which was current in the second century, and that the application of the term ecclesia by the Apostles is much easier to understand, if it was founded on an impressive saying of our Lord." But, indeed, the fact that it occurs only in Matthew is no just ground for suspecting the genuineness of the passage. It is too remarkable a saying to have been uttered by anyone but our Lord. Some say it was left out of the Third Gospel because it was already used for party purposes, and by Mark because he was influenced by St. Peter, whose modesty is seen in the Second Gospel to dictate the omission or

inclusion of matters that concerned his relation to Christ, and that Peter, in asking Mark to be silent, was not seriously limiting his testimony. So we may, in any case, confidently accept the statement as coming from our Lord and as indicating His purpose that there should exist, after His departure, a Society, animated by His Spirit, believing in Him as revealed by the Father and the revealer of the Father—Son of Man—and, pre-eminently, the Son of God. This Society He described as "My Church" with the emphasis on the "My." His Spirit needed a body and His light an atmosphere, and these were obtained in the New Society.

Jesus had longed to be able to tell His disciples how the Kingdom of God was to come. Only hints could He have given hitherto, but now that He has got the great Confession, recorded in this passage, He speaks plainly of His coming sufferings. The Cross is near. He is about to be rejected by the official builders of the cause of "the fellowship of men with God and with one another in love." But the "stone which the builders refused would become the head stone of the corner" (Mark xii. 10 and corresponding passages in Luke and Matt.). The Spirit of Christ had not been cherished by the official Church of God which, consequently, was not fulfilling its purpose in bringing in the Kingdom of God and establishing the "fellowship of men with God and with one another in love." So there must be a reconstruction and the formation of a new Jerusalem, kept together and energised by the memory of Jesus' own dying love and the presence of His Spirit (Cf. Mark xiv. 22ff, Matt. xxvi. 20ff, Luke xxii. 19ff, 1 Cor. xi. 23ff, John xiv. 17).

Hitherto preparation only had been made for the necessary rebuilding of God's Zion. But after Jesus' death and resurrection and the " turning again " of Simon Peter when the Risen Lord appeared to him—and both he and his fellow-disciples were convinced that Jesus had been raised from the dead—*then* we see " the emergence of the Christian Brotherhood into a consciousness of its separate existence and mission to the world." (Prof. Bacon in " The Founding of the Church.")

CHAPTER VII

The Foundation of the Christian Church

Jesus had intimated that He would build His Church upon the rock of Peter's belief that He was the Messiah. But the faith exercised at Cæsarea-Philippi by Peter was buried with Jesus in the grave—for the idea of a suffering and dying Messiah had not entered into his creed and calculations. There was, therefore, a time when no faith was left on which to build the New Society —when Peter and the other followers of Jesus were terror-stricken and hopelessly scattered as the result of the tragic end of their dear Master. What, then, happened to bring them together again, in the face of grave danger, and form themselves into the Society contemplated by our Lord? The answer is, there came to them a new and "living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter i. 3). They were the New Brotherhood resting upon "an empty Tomb and an objectively revealed Lord," as Prof. R. G. Macintyre says in "The Other Side of Death." No less solid a foundation can be reasonably imagined for so great and magnificent a structure as was reared upon it—the Christian Church. A fact so important—for without it the Church of Christ becomes a mere castle in the air—is one of which no Christian can afford to be in doubt.

The Foundation of the Christian Church

After the death of Jesus the Chief Priests and their more zealous followers enjoyed a brief period of exultant triumph tempered by a feeling of extreme exasperation with Pilate who had refused to re-write the titulus as to Jesus' Messiahship and had thus placed them in a false and humiliating position with the Common People. A large number of the vast multitude that had assembled for the Feast had been surprised by the violent proceedings against Jesus and were filled with a deep sense of foreboding and genuine sorrow that One whom they had privately accounted to be the Messiah had come to so sudden and inexplicable an end. But there were some, the eleven disciples, the Marys, Salome, the little family at Bethany and, possibly, Nicodemus—the ones who afterwards formed the nucleus of the New Society—whose mental state after Jesus' crucifixion was indescribable. Their life was under an eclipse. There is not a vestige of evidence that this inner circle of the friends of the Master had anticipated the events that followed. They had not contemplated the death of Jesus until those final hours of solemn warning before the arrest, and then they could only think of the peril in which they themselves stood. To assume that they expected Him to rise again is to fly in the face of the most explicit statement of the Gospels.

The four Evangelists tell us of the part Joseph of Arimathea took in the burial of Jesus, and three of them inform us that the body was laid in a tomb hewn out of a rock. If John was an eye-witness of the Crucifixion and gives us the illuminating fact that there was a garden near the Cross and that the tomb was in the garden, Matthew tells us that the

tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Then we are to remember also what is hinted at in the record that the Sabbath was near, necessitating a hasty burial. When Joseph was engaged upon his self-imposed mission to Pilate to get possession of the body, Nicodemus met him bringing a " mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds weight." So the two of them took the " body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with spices as the custom of the Jews is to bury " (John xix. 39). These two men laid the body on a specially prepared ledge in the rock-hewn cave, and a stone was rolled up against the entrance. A guard was placed over the tomb to prevent interference with the body, and that guard was probably Jewish, responsible to the High Priest whose interest was that the most careful watch should be kept. Now, on the first day of the week, when Peter and John hurried to the sepulchre at the bidding of Mary Magdalene they found it empty, and *this is the cardinal fact* without which one cannot explain the subsequent trend of events in Jerusalem and Judea. For something happened that morning that set fire to a train of proceedings, which, so far as we can see, could not possibly have happened on any other hypothesis. It stopped the triumph of the priests at the very time when we would have expected it to have been in full sway. It united the disciples—hitherto so weak and vacillating—into a body which fire and sword and torture could not turn aside from its purpose. It built up a Church and a spiritual comradeship which by every precedent ought to have been stamped out in its infancy or killed by ridicule. It brought over an immense company of

the priests and, finally, won the great Saul of Tarsus himself—one of the sternest, strongest and most logical intellects of that or any other age. This cumulative and connected sequence of most improbable events did not arise out of nothing. To say that, or that the story of the resurrection was an after-thought that invented the "improbable things that happened, is an invasion of our God-given powers of reasoning and an affront to the principles of cause and effect." The case for the empty tomb is so strong that, as Lukyn Williams says: "The Jews have never denied that the tomb was empty. They do not deny that Jesus left save as a corpse—carried out by human hands." But all the explanations of the empty tomb put forward by critics—such as the alleged removal of the body by Joseph of Arimathea or by the disciples, or that it was the wrong tomb that was found empty—all have been conclusively shown to be utterly unjustifiable and improbable suppositions needing little consideration. But the evidential value of the grave clothes has not been sufficiently emphasised.

When the women first came to the sepulchre, to their astonishment and awe, they saw the grave clothes and instinctively inferred that someone had removed the body. It is clear from the account in the Fourth Gospel that they had no other possibility in their minds. So they hastened back to tell the disciples, wondering where the body would have been laid. Peter and John rushed away at once. John is the first to arrive at the tomb, and stooping down to look through the narrow doorway to the cave he sees something which sets his thoughts racing along strange and altogether unexpected channels.

" He seeth the linen cloths lying," and, as Latham remarks in " The Risen Master," p. 3 : " The Greek word for ' seeth ' suggests he did not expect the cloths to be there." Peter then coming on the scene enters and " seeth " the linen cloths, but this time, as Latham points out, " the Greek word employed signified that Peter looks at them with a view to making out what they mean, i.e., the meaning of their peculiar position—the napkin which was round Jesus' head not being with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself."

The position of the grave clothes themselves is a standing refutation of the contention that human hands removed the body for, in that case, the grave clothes would have gone with it. With an armed guard at hand—even though they should be sleeping —the marauders, without any illumination, would not have risked detection by spending any time unwinding sheets which, according to tradition, must have been at least eight feet long. The body would have been carried out swiftly and silently in exactly the condition in which it had been found. Then, what about the spices ? These would have been placed, according to usage, in the folds of the linen sheets wound round the body ; and in this case the quantity was large—100 pounds. In Eastern burials the shoulders and face are left bare and the napkin is wrapped turban-like around the head. " If," says Latham, " the Body of Christ had been stolen, leaving the cloths behind, the cloths must have been unwound and the spices have fallen on the floor of the tomb." The same would have happened if Jesus had revived out of a swoon —but the centurion settled that point at the Cross.

There is no mention of spices because they were still in the folds of the cloths. The explanation of the whole situation is, that the wounded and physical body of our Lord had passed into the spiritual and glorified Risen Body without disturbing the cloths which had simply settled down on the ledge in their original position. To quote Latham again: "The narrative of St. John, as I read it, exhales the ineffable quietude which belongs to heavenly ways: not a word in it suggests the presence of any effort; we see no sign of action born of the motives of men: the clothes are as undisturbed as if no hand ever came near them, nothing shows the intervention of any means. In this signal and supreme occasion . . . God, so every token whispers, did all Himself. . . . What it says I make out to be this: All that was Jesus of Nazareth has suffered its change and is gone. We—grave clothes, spices and napkin—belong to the earth and remain." Hence the disciples, who went to the tomb expecting to find the body of our Lord removed by human hands, on seeing what they saw, did not go seeking for the real burial-place. And what they saw did not merely suggest to them that Jesus had re-arisen to earthly life like Lazarus, for they did not get greatly excited, nor did they rush hither and thither in search of Him. They were rather convinced that something infinitely more wonderful and penetrating had taken place—that Jesus had been lifted beyond any earthly necessity or human need. What they saw brought unspeakable peace into their souls. They "saw and believed" and "went away again unto their homes."

But the empty tomb was not all that the early disciples of Jesus had to build their hopes on for the future. Their Risen Lord appeared to them at intervals during the space of forty days and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God ; and as the statements in the Gospels and Acts regarding these " appearances " are not accepted by some modern critics, it is necessary that we should devote some time to the consideration of a matter that so intimately concerns our subject.

Of the nineteen persons mentioned in the Gospels as closely associated with Jesus for some time before and at the time of His Crucifixion, it can be conclusively proved that sixteen of them were Galileans who belonged to the neighbourhood of the Sea of Galilee and had definite ties with that region. The women of that inner circle of Jesus' friends were all in Jerusalem at the Passover, for happenings of great import had been anticipated in connection with their Master. He had been in close seclusion for some weeks and could not go up into the city openly without challenging the gravest consequences —but how openly and impressively did He make His entrance ! That He had been determined to go up on this occasion must have been known to these women, for not one of them was absent. The disciples also went up, full of the gravest forebodings and apprehension, as proved by the words of Thomas : " Let us go with Him that we may die with Him."

What, then, would have been the natural behaviour of these Galileans under the stress of a cruel and almost annihilating blow like our Lord's tragic end ? There is but one answer.

Extreme negative criticism assumes that under no possible conditions did Jesus rise from the grave, and that the reports that the tomb was found empty were accretions in later times to the original Gospel story. Well, these devoted friends of Jesus acted without any knowledge of these future accretions. On this assumption, they would, acting like ordinary people, have remained in hiding until the Sabbath observance was completed and then fled to their homes where, surrounded by friends, and at a maximum distance from Jerusalem, they might hope to re-engage unobtrusively in their ordinary occupations. And, but for certain events to follow, they would have remained so engaged all their lives. We know of no human circumstances capable of drawing them as a body, within a few weeks, to the scene of their greatest danger.

But even supposing they had found the tomb empty, as reported, that would have been capable of different interpretations. Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John took different views of the fact. What would have been the feelings of Philip and Thomas —thinkers and doubters,—if that had been all? Doubt would have grown apace as the days passed, if no word of encouragement came from the cold and silent and mysterious empty tomb. The result would have been that soon the importunities of friends, the necessities of nature, and the impelling call of their native country would have combined to break down their morbid desire to stay amid a scene which had witnessed the earthly ruin of their most transcendent hopes.

Some critics say that this is what happened— that in two weeks from the Crucifixion the disciples

are seen on the shores of Galilee (John xxi. 1-3). This fact is also said to contradict the reports of the appearance of the Risen Messiah in Judea. But this is but a superficial criticism, for it ignores the statement in our oldest Gospel records: "Go, tell His disciples and Peter; He goeth before you into Galilee, there ye shall see Him" (Mark xvi. 7). Then the disciples we now see near their old haunts do not look like men who have got back again to their old trade. The constitution of the group is significant. Nathaniel of Cana is there, and Thomas; for the meeting is clearly one of those natural gatherings of men with a common purpose and waiting for something, and with time hanging on their hands. They go out to fish to pass the time. The narrative is vivid, and undoubtedly an authentic piece of history, the unmistakable record of one who witnessed the scene and events he describes (John xxi. 1-14). Otherwise, if there had been no appearance of our Risen Lord to those Galilean fishermen, they and their associates would have remained in Galilee. To assume that a body of men, containing a doubter like Thomas and others like Philip, equally unsusceptible and unemotional, could have been brought back to Jerusalem to face contempt, persecution, hardship, imprisonment, and cruel death, by a sort of subjective hallucination, is a demand upon credulity a thousand times more difficult to the modern mind than anything in the records of the Gospels.

Now, what happened was this: Within six weeks after the Crucifixion the eleven were banded together in Jerusalem, with a certainty of conviction and a joy of life, which all the terrors of the cruel

ancient world were unable to shake. For, as Dr. Headlam says in his "Miracles of the New Testament": "The resurrection had power to change timid peasants into fearless Evangelists. If you take away the resurrection you cannot account for the preaching of the Gospel. If you cleave to the resurrection you have adequate and sufficient cause for what happened afterwards." Here then, is the beginning of the Christian Church, the unassailable proof of the resurrection itself and of those mysterious, personal manifestations in which our Risen Lord gave to His Church its sacred commission to the world—manifestations which the latent discoveries of Science make more easily appreciated, instead of pronouncing impossible.

It is now taught by Science that the transference from one form of energy into another—from the physical to the mental and from the mental to the physical—indicates a closer relation in their ultimate nature than appears to ordinary observation. The new theory of matter, based upon the phenomena of radio-activity, calls for the revision of the conception of the place of "matter" in the Divine Order. It is evident that the ultimate and basic element in the cosmos is energy which can and does express itself to our limited view in many various and temporary forms. The Curies and other brilliant experimenters have shown that energy has only to take a new direction or poise to cause the whole material manifestation of things to take a new and unexpected form. And this implies the subordination of matter to mind or it means nothing. Then in the latest treatises on Relativity by eminent mathematicians we find that, in dealing with

the possibilities of four-dimensional space, they distinctly contemplate that a four-dimensional being, moving in the three-dimensional space, would manifest precisely those characteristics which are recorded of some of our Lord's appearances, such, for example, as passing through a closed door or disappearing suddenly without any means of exit.

In these appearances of our Lord we are dealing with a phenomenon which transcends our existing knowledge of physical and spiritual laws. But to quote Dr. Swete in "The Appearances of Our Lord after the Passion," "The limitations of our knowledge ought to be no hindrance to belief, if we bear in mind that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is, *ex hypothesi*, a fact unique in human experience, and that the border land of flesh and spirit to which the risen body of our Lord seems to have belonged during the forty days, is an unexplored territory of which no man can speak with confidence on this side of the grave." And in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge ("Man and the Universe"): "The appearances during the Forty Days are mysterious but they can be accepted very much as they stand, for they agree with our experience of genuine psychical phenomena the world over."

That Science should be to-day speaking thus, directly or indirectly, of the matters that concern the foundation of the Christian Religion and the Church—the Empty Tomb and the objectively revealed Lord—is a sign of the times that should inspire hope and confidence. For fifty years or more the breath of science and philosophy was spiritually poisonous and their doctrines spiritually asphyxiating, resulting in the production

of a Rationalist press which has been exercising a most baneful influence upon all classes of men. In fact, it can be safely said that for every convert lost to Christianity during that period through the so-called "higher criticism" of the Biblical text, a hundred have been lost as a result of the conviction that Science had definitely destroyed the very basis upon which faith in God and His Messiah and the Future Life can rest. But now, instead of this narrow science and philosophy of the materialists—of Haekel and his confrères—and the paralysing atmosphere they produced, we have the more spiritual science and philosophy of men like Lodge, James, Eucken, Bergson and Einstein.

CHAPTER VIII

The Name—the Christian Church

After the Ascension the followers of Christ met regularly—" continuing steadfastly in prayer " and waiting for the fulfilment of the promise that the Holy Spirit would come and equip them for their work as the representatives of their Risen and Exalted Lord. They possessed already self-consciousness as a religious society, filling the vacancy caused by the fall of Judas, and adding to their number those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ. With the descent of the Pentecostal blessing, proving that Jesus had begun to reign as the Messiah, their number and influence greatly increased. But as yet they were known only as " the brethren " or " the disciples " or " the called " or " the saints " or " the men of Christ "—names, none of which was destined to become a distinguishing or permanent title of the community called into conscious being by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It was left to the believing community itself—as also was the organisation necessary from time to time—to discover the name which would best explain to its contemporaries its nature and purpose. When, therefore, it began to ask itself by what name is should be called, it assumed, not the name " the Kingdom of God "—it was too modest to do that—though it had reason

to regard itself as in some measure the realisation of Christ's ideal, expressed in that phrase, in so far as "the Kingdom of God" was capable of realisation in an institution; but instead it adopted a name which the disciples had heard from the lips of the Master Himself, a name with Old Testament associations and intelligible in the Gentile world, a name capable of containing all that Christ wanted to preserve and express. That name was the Ecclesia or Church.

The thoughts which ran through the minds of the members of the early Christian community regarding themselves are expressed in the First Epistle of Peter. They were "new born babes," "living stones" forming a spiritual house, "a holy priesthood," "an elect race," "a holy nation," "a people for God's possession." All these different terms are borrowed from the Old Testament. Further, we meet in the Apostolic Writings with such names as "the flock of God," "the holy city," "the new Jerusalem," "the covenant people." So the name that is to be given as a permanent title to the Christian Community must embrace all these ideas, so as to preserve the true continuity of the covenant people of God and express, on the part of that community, the conviction that it is a corporation with a constitution and with solemn mutual obligations and privileges—all arising from association with Christ.

Among the Greeks the word Ecclesia had no religious association. It meant an assembly of free citizens in a free state, convened by a herald. In this assembly the members were on an equality. In the Septuagint, which was in use throughout the

Roman Empire wherever there was a body of Greek-speaking Jews, the word "ecclesia" was the translation of the Hebrew word "qahal" which was a term that represented Israel gathered together before God as a religious worshipping body. Also "synagogue" is used in the Septuagint to describe an assembly of Israel. At the time of Christ this term had become so identified with the Jewish nation of that day and its religious pretensions that the name "synagogue" could not be applied to the followers of Christ without the risk of confusion. Hence the title, ecclesia or church, was used as being the most appropriate—intelligible to Jews and Gentiles—and calculated to meet with less prejudice throughout the Roman Empire, as it did not savour in the eyes of the Romans so much of revolt as the term—"the Kingdom of God." The name, ecclesia, also had a tendency to discourage the temporal aspirations readily derived by the Jews from the idea of the promised Kingdom. Prof. Burton, who goes fully into the meaning of the word and its different uses concludes: "When after Peter's confession Jesus spoke of His Church He had the Kingdom in view; the Church was the instrument for its realisation on the earth, and the Kingdom is realised in so far as the Church identifies itself with Christ in spirit, aim and life. The saying of Jesus must have determined the adoption of the name for the new Society." (Burton on Galatians.)

The addition of "Christian" to the new name of the community of believers was not made till some time after the Church had made an impression on the Gentile world. The early Church historian,

Luke, carefully notes when the name Christian was first applied: "The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts xi. 26). From the connection in which this fact is recorded we can gather something of the circumstances which led to its adoption.

Up to that time the term was unknown to the Church in Judea when "the Church" was the title given to the followers of Christ, considered as a body (Acts v. 11). We learn from Acts that the gospel had been received in Antioch before that date, not only by Jews, but also by the Gentiles, and that the work of evangelisation was so hopeful that Paul was sent for to Tarsus. He soon came and his presence and personality gave a great impulse to the process of Gentile conversion. His ceaseless energy and zeal drew crowds to hear him in Antioch and throughout Galatia and the cities of Asia. The fame of the great teacher and preacher spread among the Gentiles. Though there was esoteric teaching for the circle of believers, the gospel was freely preached to all who came to hear. Soon the name of Christ and other terms of the Apostolic teaching got diffused among the proverbially witty, non-believing citizens of Antioch, and were made the subject of jesting allusion.

Now we learn from Luke that one topic prominent in the teaching of Paul was "the Kingdom of God," which was a note of the preaching of the Gospel from the beginning. The Voice crying in the Wilderness was the voice of a royal herald, and the expressions in Luke iii. 4-5 are appropriate to the victorious advance of a great King. Our Lord Himself confirmed the proclamation of His herald.

He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. iv. 23) and when after the resurrection He discoursed to His disciples about the future of the Church He is described as speaking of "the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Acts i. 3). The Lord's Prayer, which was in common use among His followers, contained the phrase, and every believer prayed daily for the realisation of that Kingdom.

To a pagan in those days the words translated in the New Testament, "King" and "Kingdom," meant "Emperor" and "Empire." Take for example Acts xvii. 7 and 1 Peter ii. 17, where Emperor is clearly meant. (And this usage of the words is found in the later Greek historians.) Hence the words "King" and "Kingdom" used in reference to Christ would have had a treasonable significance—proved by Acts xvii. 7. Taken otherwise they would have served to point a jest, as in the cruel treatment of the Saviour by the soldiers of Herod or Pilate (Luke xxiii. 11, Matt. xxvii. 30).

Another subject frequently on the lips of Paul, as we can gather from his Epistles, was the conception of the life of faith as a warfare or campaign (1 Tim. i. 18, vi. 12, Col. ii. 5); it was a very suggestive idea. Associate it with that of the Kingdom of the Messiah and you get the picture that would have risen before the minds of the scoffers in Antioch—that of a rival emperor or Christos, supporting his sovereignty by a military force of slaves, Jews and other nonentities. A nickname, tersely expressing the sense of ridicule, would rapidly grow popular, and such a nickname we may confidently assert Christiani was in Antioch. The termination is Roman or Latin, not

Greek; and in that language such a termination forms a derivative from a proper name, usually the name of a person of distinction, and signifies that person's belongings or followers. A good example is Crassiani, meaning the followers of Crassus. Such derivatives were very suggestive of the soldiers of the great generals who rose to eminence in the closing days of the Republic. Here then we have the germ idea of Christiani—the soldiers attached to the personal service of the King or Emperor Christos.

The name "Christian," coming as it did from a hostile source, did not at first win acceptance among the disciples. It only occurs thrice in the New Testament—in the passage considered and in Acts xxvi. 28 and 1 Peter iv. 16. It appears in all these passages as a name recognised by those outside the pale of the Church, the name by which believers were known in their dealings with the external world. In all these uses of the term it implies contempt on the part of the outsiders. Agrippa utters the name in a tone of derision: "You think, Paul, at the rate you are speaking, you will soon be able to persuade me to be a Christian." In 1 Peter the reference is to the slave-owner or persecutor who ill-treats his slave or inferior simply because he is a Christian.

We learn from the historian, Socrates, that in later times the Emperor Julian attempted to annihilate Christianity by ridicule, stigmatising it with a fresh word of contempt—he used to call Christ, the Galilean, and Christians, Galileans, and he actually endeavoured to enforce the change of terminology by a public decree. But even the

derision and hatred of an Emperor did not succeed. That Emperor's exclamation, as he lay dying with his conscience awakened, " Galilee vicisti "—proved that he knew in his heart that in the conflict of the two empires—that of Christ and that of Pagan Rome—the " contemptible little army " of Christians had won. By this time the Christian name that the disciples had been, at first, reluctant to adopt as descriptive of the Church, had come to be regarded as its main ornament. Chrysostom, addressing the citizens of Antioch, could say : " As Peter was the first among the Apostles to preach the Christ, so was this city the first to be crowned with the name of Christian as a diadem of wondrous beauty."

CHAPTER IX

The Ideal Christian Church

HAVING considered, in general terms, the Christian ecclesia, and, in particular, the foundation on which it rests, let us next look at the ideal representation of the Church, given in the Apostolic writings.

In the classical passage, Matt. xvi. 18, Jesus uses the figure of a building in describing the future reconstructed Church. This metaphor He employs again in His impressive conversation with the Chief Priests and Elders, shortly before His Crucifixion (Matt. xxi. 42). The figure is fully developed in 1 Peter ii. 4-5: "Unto whom coming, a Living Stone, rejected indeed of men but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." In 1 Cor. iii. 9-14, Christ is described as the Foundation, and Paul and his readers as Builders, building on the same foundation a structure which, in the Great Day, will be tested by fire. It is evident that the reconstructed Church is to be built, not only with the usable stones of the old building, but also with those quarried from the Gentile world. This building is a temple, as is brought out in 2 Cor. vi. 16. Both here and in Ephesians ii. 20-22, it is clearly stated that the building is for a dwelling-place of God in or by the Spirit. The idea is borrowed from the Old Testament from the reference in connection with

Solomon's Temple: "Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less the house that I have built" (1 Kings viii. 27).

The word translated "temple" usually also means a King's palace, and in Daniel v. we have both uses together. The Church was, therefore, meant to be the palace of the King of Kings on earth. Further the imagery was calculated to convey the idea that Christ designed that His people should be united together in firm, helpful fellowship, forming a shelter and a home for everyone, as well as a dwelling-place for Himself whose Spirit permeated the whole Building and kept it together. The stones of the Building are living stones because they are in contact with the Chief Corner Stone that is full of life and light, so that, like the stone of the poet's fancy which gathered light and warmth in the day time and gave them out in the darkness and coldness of the night, each of these stones gives out, in loving words and deeds, for the benefit of a benighted world, the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" who came to unveil before the eyes of men the heart of Infinite Love and interpret the Divine Compassion.

In John xv. 5, Jesus is represented as saying to His disciples: "I am the vine and ye are the branches," indicating the relation that exists between Himself and His Church. As the branches must remain in the vine, if they are to bear fruit, so apart from Him, the Church is nothing better than so much timber fit for the burning. A similar figure is employed by Paul in Rom. xi. 16-24. This imagery is also suggested by the Old Testament—e.g., by Ps. lxxx. 8-15, Is. v. 1-7—and its teaching

is a distinct advance on that in the last figure, for a tree differs from a building in that its development is an outgrowth of its own inner life according to the laws of that life. The Church of Christ is not a structure, rising up by additions from without, but is, like a living tree, growing and bearing fruit by its own inherent vitality, each twig growing out of an earlier branch and deriving nourishment and growth through other branches from the root. Christ is the Root and Stem of this Great Tree of Life, and the Holy Spirit the living and life-giving sap. Only by structural union with the stem and by the inward flow of the sap permeating every part, can the branches, or believers, live and bear fruit. This figure considered in the light of the form it assumes in Romans xi., shows clearly that the Christian Church is in vital connection with the Church of God in the Old Dispensation, in which also the Apostolic writings find the Spirit of Christ at work, and is meant to embrace Gentiles as well as Jews. The vineyard is now in a "new and stupendous environment." For, as in Nature, we may imagine that by some astronomical change the entire conditions of things may be altered so that places located amid the rigours of the Arctic Zone might suddenly come to have the climate of the Riviera or the Tropics, with enormous results in the way of transfigurement of the landscape—the dark sea becoming azure, the silent woods ringing with melody, and ice and snow yielding to grass and flowers and resplendent beauty, so, through the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and through the descent of the Holy Spirit, there has actually been

brought about a change in human, moral and spiritual environment, capable of establishing that perfect reign of God, not only in humanity, but in the whole universe.

Next, we find Christ speaking of Himself as " the Good Shepherd " and of His Church as a Flock of Sheep who hear His voice and follow Him (John x. 1-16) ; and to this Flock belongs the Kingdom (Luke xii. 32). Peter was asked by His Master to shepherd the sheep and lambs of this Flock (John xxi, 15-17). Paul instructed the elders of the Church at Ephesus to protect the flock from the wolves that would not spare it (Acts xxvi. 2f-29), while in Eph. iv. 11 he speaks of ministers as pastors. In Hebrew xiii. 20 Christ is called the " Great Shepherd of the Sheep" and in 1 Peter v. the elders are bidden to shepherd the Flock till " the Chief Shepherd appear." In Rev. vii. 17 we hear the voice of an angel saying : " The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them unto fountains of waters of life." This metaphor also is inspired by the Old Testament Scriptures (Pss. xxiii. 1, lxxviii. 70-72, Is. xl. etc.), and is meant to teach that the followers of Christ are distinct, living individuals, each needing His protection—a protection they can be sure of having only when they keep together and follow Him.

In several passages of the New Testament we have the profound and far-reaching image of the Church as the Body of Christ—Rom. xii. 44, 1 Cor. vi. 15, Eph. i. 23 etc. We gather from the Epistle to the Romans that the Spirit of Christ dwells in the believer as the source of immortal life and moral uprightness and as the mainspring of a new activity.

Thus we can see how the Church came to be regarded as the material and living dwelling-place of the Spirit, and the medium through which Christ manifests Himself to the world and works out His purposes of mercy. Believers are many but the Spirit is one. So they are joined in one outward and visible community which can be spoken of as the Body of Christ; and, as in the human body, so each member of the Church is designed and fitted to do service for the whole body, such service as the Spirit renders possible. The members give different services according to their natural constitution and the gifts of the Spirit. The idea is most instructively developed in 1 Cor. xii. 12-30 where we are shown that the gain of one member of the Body of Christ is the gain of all the members, and the loss of one member, the loss of all. Here we see distinct progress in the New Testament teaching on the Church of Christ. The relation of believers to one another is made clearer and is seen to be more intimate. The interest of the body as a whole is seen to be the individual's interest; for, while it is true we have each to bear his own burden, we, also, must "bear one another's burdens" (Gal. vi. 2-5) to "fulfil the law of Christ." We need one another and especially Christ who defends every member of His Body and finally causes the humblest, as well as the most honoured member, to share with Him His throne and glory. Closely connected with the figure of the Body is that of Christ as the Head of the Body (Eph. i. 22, iv. 15, v. 2-3 etc.). This is an important development of the doctrine we have just been considering, and brings out clearly and forcibly the truth for the Christian Church,

that Christ is its seat of authority, by whom its action is meant to be guided and controlled.

Finally, we find the ideal Church depicted as the Bride of Christ—a figure in which the teaching of the Apostolic writings on this matter reaches its climax.

As early as Mark ii. 19 this metaphor appears. To refer, for its explanation, as Drs. Salmond, Swete, and other commentators do, to the common Old Testament figure of God as the husband of Israel, is not sufficient, for God is not represented in the Old Testament as a Bridegroom but as a Husband (Hos. ii. 7, 16 etc.). In John iii. 29 we have the words of the Baptist : " He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." The same type of imagery we find in the parable of the Marriage Feast of the King's Son in Matt. xxii. 1-14 (Cf. Luke xiv. 14-24 where the Aramaic word for marriage-feast was used, according to Dalman). The language in which the parable is clothed " indicates that by the time the Gospel of Matthew was composed, the consummation of the Kingdom of God was portrayed as a wedding-feast " (Prof. H. A. A. Kennedy). In Judaism the bliss of the Messianic age was frequently depicted as a festive meal, but there is no trace in the Old Testament of the idea of a wedding-feast. How then did the idea become current in the early Christian Church ? The germ of the conception is probably, as Prof. H. A. A. Kennedy points out, in 4 Ezra ix. 38, and x. 24, where the seer has a vision of a disconsolate woman who suddenly becomes glorified, and immediately afterwards gives place to " a city

builded" (x. 27). This city is identified with Zion (x. 44) and is described as the heavenly pattern of the earthly Jerusalem (x. 49). These pictures seem to point back to a definite strain in apocalyptic tradition, and of this tradition traces are found in the Book of Revelation which describes the Jerusalem from above as the Bride of the Lamb. The language of St. Paul, in his earliest epistle—that to the Galatians—where he compares Hagar, the symbol of the Old Covenant, who is a slave-girl, with the earthly Jerusalem which remains in bondage, whereas Sarah, the symbol of the New Covenant, who is a free woman and the "mother" of believers, corresponds to the "heavenly Jerusalem," suggests that already the perfected Messianic Community had been symbolised as a woman. It was only one step to represent her as the Bride of the Messiah. And that step ought to be traced perhaps to Jesus' designation of Himself as the "Bridegroom." The parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins seems to presuppose the metaphor and has for its central idea a preparedness for the Parousia. The crisis comes with the arrival of the Bridegroom for the Wedding. The statement in the Apocalypse: "The Spirit and the Bride say come"—shows that to the writer of that book, and to his readers also, the term "Bride" had become, by that time, a recognised designation of the Church. Both in the Pauline Epistles and in Revelation the figure of the "Bride," as applied to the Church, is used to exhibit Christian duties and privileges. In 2. Cor. xi. 1, Paul speaks as having betrothed the congregation there to a husband, presenting it as a chaste virgin to Christ, where the Apostle plays the part of the

pronubus—the person responsible for bringing about the betrothal. We gather from different passages, 2 Cor. iv. 4, Col. i. 22 etc., that the presentation refers to the Parousia when the Kingdom of God will be consummated and the Bridal Union of the Christian Community with the triumphant Messiah will take place. In Eph. v. 25-32, the Apostle elaborates this idea, and there he declares Christ gave Himself for the Church that He might sanctify her and present her to Himself arrayed in glory, " having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Here emphasis is laid again upon purity of character as indispensable to the believer in Christ. And by a bold paradox Christ Himself presents the Bride. The Apostle sums up his discussion of the bridal imagery by saying : " This is a profound mystery, but I speak in regard to Christ and the Church " (v. 32). In the Apocalypse xix. 7-9, we have a description of the seer's vision of the marriage-supper of the Lamb, which represents the condition of things when the Church militant has become the Church triumphant and has entered into rest, joining in the singing of a song of praise and deliverance. Hitherto believers, as a community, are depicted as betrothed to Christ, the Bridegroom, but now we see the marriage ceremony has taken place and the faithful are perfectly at one with their Lord. The blessedness of an unbroken union and fellowship is realised.

From this scriptural presentation of the ideal Christian Church we learn that its Head and Lord planned that His followers who, *with Him*, constitute the Church, should be so united that their association may be the earthly home of all who are of the

family of God—a home in which spiritual shelter, nourishment and growth are offered to all the members. Further, that by its unity in visible fellowship, it should, by co-operation with God in Christ, be able to fulfil its mission in the world, namely, to make Christ known, and help to bring the world under His sway, and thus be instrumental in establishing the ideal of the perfect Kingdom of Glory which is to take the place of Christ's Kingdom of Grace.

CHAPTER X

The Christian Church and Judaism

THE Christian Church, from the earthly side, is a corporation of people who profess devotion to the person of Christ and His Mission in the world. Like other terrestrial institutions it must have a constitution, with laws and officials for the regulation of its affairs, an outward form as well as an inward life, the actual not less than the ideal.

The note, struck in the Apostolic preaching after the resurrection—"Jesus is the Christ" (Messiah)—associates the new religious movement and its embodiment in the Christian Church with the hope of Israel and with God's people under the Old Dispensation. For, as we have seen, God has never been without witnesses on the earth since the promise in Gen. iii. 15 was given, and His people have never been without the hope of a perfect salvation or of the consummation of the Kingdom of God. The call of Abraham marked a very important stage in the revelation and realisation of that Kingdom, for he and his descendants were brought into such special relation with God that in them "the Kingdom of God assumed visible and permanent form among men" (Dr. Agar Beet). Of Israel whom Jehovah delivered from the bondage of Egypt and separated from other nations to be an organ for the abiding manifestation of His existence,

nearness and power, He spoke as " My Son," " My People." The question is often asked, why were the Israelites the chosen people of God ? The choice, we may be sure, was not arbitrary nor without reason ; it was not that of a moment, but gradual. So the real question is, by what divine process were they prepared to be the chosen people that the later prophets and the events of history declared them to be ?

May there not be something in what Renan once called the " Semitic genius for religion ? " The mind of the Semites was keen, alert, receptive and intuitional, rather than logical. Their restless energy and acquisitiveness in religion—not less than in commerce—contributed to making them leaders in that sphere. The nomadic life they led imposed limitations that made for simplicity, and the mysteries and the dangers of the wild desert emphasised the constant necessity of divine help. The long marches by night, under the silent stars, inspired awe and enforced contemplation. The close unity of the tribes suggested the worship of one rather than many gods. Then, in the course of the years, the Israelites became the inheritors of the best in religion and law that had been attained by the older Semitic races. In fact, by their descent, and providential location between the great nations of the earth, they became the heirs and interpreters of the noblest beliefs and ideals hitherto attained ; and it is not surprising, as we learn from the Old Testament, that the Spirit of God should reveal itself through the most enlightened men of the most spiritually minded race, and that that race should become the recipient of the fullest and most perfected

divine revelation. The choice, however, was not so much to privilege as to service ; and when the actual service was looked at, in the light of the ideal, the need was felt for the coming of one who could realise the ideal. Hence the world awaited the advent of the Messiah who would establish, on the everlasting foundations of justice, and truth, and love, the universal Kingdom of God.

Thus, during centuries, this people, amid the greatest vicissitudes, maintained the worship of Jehovah and was being prepared for becoming the home in which should be born in the " fulness of time " the Christ of God, in whom the Kingdom of God was to be perfectly realised, and through contact with whom by faith, on the part of men, the Eternal Divine purpose should be fulfilled in a Kingdom of the Saved.

Among these people was Christ born and the Christian Church called into being. The Greeks could claim to govern the world's thought ; there is no evidence to show that other peoples sought in Judaism for philosophic inspiration or metaphysical insight into the being of God. Yet the supreme revelation of God was not given in Greece, the home of philosophy, but in Palestine. Though the Jewish people were narrow and exclusive, while their creed seemed to be the most intolerant of creeds, and the soil it produced, humanly speaking, appeared to be most unsuitable for the cultivation of a universal faith, yet it was among these people that God became incarnate. In their religion there appeared to be a lack of religious ideas that were met with elsewhere, such as those of Divine incarnation and Divine suffering. But the Jewish religion

possessed something without which Christianity and a Christian Church would have been impossible —the great idea of ethical monotheism. The faiths of other nations were polytheistic and non-moral, and their philosophies radically pan-theistic. Israel, on the other hand, beginning with what may have been a monolatrous creed, developed in spiritual things, under the evident guidance of God, so as to become monotheistic in its conception of the Deity. And the Old Testament is the record of that spiritual evolution which culminated in Christianity and the Christian Church.

Israel, to begin with, was like the other nations round about. But by the call of Jehovah they became God's people. Under His care and guidance they got rid of the doctrine of territorialism, which linked the God and the land, though often relapsing into the Baal-worship which prevailed on every side. Jehovah demanded their whole devotion, and, by and by, they learned He was unlike other gods, and that it was necessary for them to know what His nature and requirements were. They got to know He was righteous and demanded righteousness from His people. They further realised that removal from their homes and the destruction of their temple did not end their relations with Him. They found He was in Babylon as well as in Jerusalem. Thus they learned the lesson of God's universality. In Deutero-Isaiah the monotheistic message, which is implicit in the teaching of all the canonical prophets, rings clear, and continues to do so in the teaching of the Jewish Church. Experience, bitter and trying, after the return from the captivity taught the Chosen People more lessons on Life and

Immortality, Resurrection and the Future. Only in the light of this growing knowledge of God, given to Israel, and recorded in Jewish literature, can the Christian Church, as an institution, be understood. In the teaching of Jesus, preserved by the Apostolic Church, we see things taken for granted which Jesus could not have assumed, say, in Greece or in India. To the Greeks, for example, the Fatherhood of God would have suggested physical ancestry, but to the Jew, as a result of his religious training, it meant a moral relationship. Then, the philosophies of Greece and the religions of the East were all inclined to Pantheism which ends in the denial of personality, of which the will is the centre and citadel. So, as morality is essentially a matter of will, pantheism is destructive of morality. The Old Testament lays great stress on personality. Its conception of God is that of a person, for His great characteristics of love, justice and mercy are possible only on this basis. Similarly, with its conception of man and man's relation to God, it is personal. Sin would be impossible under a pantheistic system. Forgiveness is essentially a personal matter between God and man. Thus we see how responsibility and ethic are possible. All these things and many more are contained in Judaism and assumed in the teaching of Jesus and His Apostles. We may say, then, that the Christian Church owed its Head and its teaching to Judaism. Only in Judaism could Christ have appeared, and only on the soil of Judaism could He have raised His Church.

Further, the very idea of a Church of God or of Christ comes to us from Judaism. For the first time, in the history of the Jewish people, in the evil

days when Isaiah lived, we see coming into existence what corresponds to our idea of a Divine or Christian Church. A circle of faithful people gathered round the prophet, holding themselves apart from their countrymen, treasuring the revelation given by Jehovah, a band of people who were for "signs" in Israel. "The formation of this little community," says Robertson Smith, "was a new fellowship of faith, dissociated from all national forms, maintained without the exercise of ritual services, bound together by faith in the Divine Word alone. It was the birth of a new era in the history of the Old Testament religion, for it was the birth of the conception of the Church, the first step in the emancipation of spiritual religion from the forms of political life—a step not less significant that all its consequences were not seen till centuries had passed away. The Community of true religion and the political Community of Israel had never before been separated even in thought. Now they stood side by side, never to fall back again into their old identity."
("Prophets of Israel," p. 274.)

This Community felt it was no longer dependent upon the Temple and its ritual, still less upon the State. There is, from this time forward, a strong tendency to associate the Kingdom of God with this new Community or remnant and to separate it from the nation. After the Captivity the prophets gave a picture of an ideal Israel, purified by suffering, the proper vehicle for God's purpose and revelation. A new constitution was sketched for it by Ezekiel (chs. xl.-xlviii.), an elaborate scheme of ceremonial necessary at the time to preserve the Church of God from defilement and to help to produce the feeling

of reverence for the holiness of God. Ezra put the Law in a place of authority, and with the people's undertaking to keep it arose the later Judaism—the real Judaism having begun with the promise to Abraham—a system in which law and ritual played a very important part, a system which afforded the best discipline possible for a people religiously immature. Even the legalism that followed had its higher side, for it developed lay piety. But, if this legalism was apt to make the religious life mechanical and substitute regard for the law for fellowship with God, there sprang up in the Providence of God a movement which counteracted to a large extent, the baleful influence upon spiritual life of the hair-splitting of legalism—the synagogue ministry.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the value of the service rendered to the cause of religion and the interests of the Kingdom of God by the synagogues which arose all over the Roman Empire, where Jews were found. In these synagogues the voice of prayer and praise was heard and the Septuagint read and expounded. They played a most important part in the *præparatic evangelica*,[1] and when the Christian movement had to be organised, the organisers found their models mainly in the synagogue system. Even the architecture was copied, and to this day Christian congregations are pleased to build their churches on the plan of the old synagogue. For example, the interior of Free St. George's, Edinburgh, can scarcely be distinguished from that of a well-known synagogue on the continent of Europe, built according to the original synagogue design—the synagogue of Szeged in the south of Hungary.

[1] The preparation for Christianity.

But, while there were in Judaism elements of eternal value, it is evident it was, as a system, meant to be temporary. In later Judaism were developed features which hastened its removal, drawing from Jesus, on the occasion of His Cleansing of the Temple, perhaps the most scathing words He ever uttered : " Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but ye have made it a den of robbers " (Mark xi. 17). Here our Lord is combining two most notable passages of the Old Testament, Is. lvi. 7, and Jer. vii. 11. In the former the universality and exclusiveness of post-exilic Judaism are clearly set forth. The Jew was taught that his God was the only true God for all men, and to the Jew of Jesus' time God was, not merely the supreme God—He was the only true and living God, while the deities of other nations were little more than figments of the imagination or diabolical powers. It was the Jew's God alone whom the Jewish theology required all men to acknowledge and worship, if they would attain to true spiritual life. The Jew further believed that his nation had been chosen to be the recipient of the manifestation of God and of the revelation of His will. His race alone could deal directly with Jehovah, and in the rites and at the sanctuary of Judaism alone could acceptable service be rendered to the God who claimed the entire devotions of all men. And even though prayer was possible everywhere on earth—for God was in every place—yet the devoted Jew turned his face toward the Temple in Jerusalem where he desired to worship God. Now, on the other hand, the picture in the passage in Jeremiah is that of a people who have

come to the conclusion that Jehovah will, at all costs, defend His chosen city and sanctuary whatever be the conduct of the worshippers. So Jeremiah is forced to exclaim : " You call this the temple of Jehovah but you are using it as a den of robbers." The temple was to them what their cave was to the brigands, a place in which they would take shelter and be safe when engaged in the greatest wickedness. In the time of Christ the Jews carried on an international trade and encouraged the Gentiles to come to their temple for trading—not worshipping—purposes. There was a court of the buildings in which they would do business with the Jews, and when the latter cheated them they betook themselves into the inner court into which, if a Gentile dared to enter, he forfeited his life. The ideals and possibilities of Judaism have thus become as far apart from actualities as possible. Hence our Saviour says, in effect, to the caretakers of the old religious fabric : " You Jews claim that yours is the true and living God. You claim further that Jerusalem is the one city, and the temple the one spot where complete and satisfactory worship may be offered to Him by all nations. Yet what do you offer to the world as an aid to such worship ? This—not merely a house of merchandise, a place consecrated to buying and selling and making money, but a collection of the moral dregs of your people, the very scum and off-scourings of the nation, of scoundrels and cheats who find in their religion an immunity which will enable them to escape the penalties that are their due, and to continue once more their career of iniquity—a veritable brigand's den."

The Apostles and the early followers of Christ,

as we gather from the first part of Acts, which, according to the highest critical authorities, is absolutely correct history, confined their evangelistic efforts to private houses and the precincts of the temple. They continued to worship with the Jews, and there was scarcely any difference between them, except that the former believed that Jesus was the Messiah and were baptised in His Name and that they celebrated the Lord's Supper. But there soon arose one who seemed to understand better the mind of His Master and to catch His spirit—Stephen. He was a Hellenist, reared in the invigorating spiritual atmosphere of a synagogue—probably that of the Alexandrians with Saul as a fellow-worshipper, where some high thinking was done. This man, on being converted to Christianity, greatly helped that cause, enabling it to define itself and to separate from the narrow bounds of Judaism that, in the designed larger and freer community, the religious union of the world might be effected.

The part played by Stephen in the promotion of the interests of the Christian Church is important because, as a result of his teaching and sufferings, the stream of the Christian life, which was only playing about Jerusalem, began to move to Samaria, Galilee, and even to the Gentile world. Also, because of its connection, in the way of preparation, with the great Apostle to the Gentiles who was to be instrumental, under God, in settling the question of the relation of Christianity to Judaism. We gather from Acts that Stephen quoted the Septuagint from memory, that his conception of Old Testament history was strongly reminiscent of the Hellenistic method of treatment, and that in

his outlook upon the patriarchal narrative and in his conception of the character of Moses, and especially in his exegesis, he showed signs of having been influenced by Philo. All this would have been only in his favour with Hellenists. What, then, was the cause of their deadly opposition? Stephen's offence is formulated in Acts vi. 13-14: "This man ceaseth not to speak against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and change the customs of Moses, delivered to us." Bousset has clearly and emphatically shown that Hellenistic Judaism had gradually divorced itself from observances associated with the temple worship and had substituted for them the more simple and more spiritual services of the synagogue. Why, then, this outburst of wrath, on the part of Hellenists, against Stephen for his disparagement of the temple and the worship of which it formed the centre? Is it not probable that it was because he asserted that the temple worship had been from its inauguration a hindrance and not a help to spiritual worship? His fellow-Hellenists would have held that it was of divine origin, though, owing to the changed condition of the national life, it had outlived its period of usefulness. But Stephen must have made a sweeping statement to the effect that David's desire to build a temple and Solomon's realisation of that desire, had been in themselves declensions from the divine plan and the cause of the nation's defection from the high ideals for the worship and service of God promulgated by Moses—just as some hold that the protest of Samuel was a clear indication that the appointment of kings over Israel was contrary to

the Divine mind and a departure from the true theocratic ideal. To Stephen the temple and its cult were an evil from the beginning, a manifestation of the tendency to apostasy, indicated by the turning away of Israel in the Wilderness from Moses and his teaching, to worship the gods of Egypt. Thus, what used to be regarded as the glory of the nation was shown to be its shame, touching proud Jews in their most sensitive part. Hence the cry of blasphemy, the false charges, the arrest and the trial before the Sanhedrim. Stephen's address to the council penetrates to the core of Judaism and expresses most unmercifully its human accretions. He stands in the line of the prophets, but his condemnation and repudiation of the popular religion is intensified a thousand-fold because he sees what were tendencies in the days of the prophets, have reached their evil fruition in the rejection of the nation's Messiah on the part of the official Jewish Church. Stephen's hearers did not cry out for mercy, like those who had listened to Peter on the day of Pentecest, but gnashed their teeth at him and rushed him out to be stoned to death for blasphemy; and in connection with the historian's description of the rite of stoning a blasphemer, when the clothes of the accused or condemned are thrown at the feet of the praeco or herald (reading should be "His" not "their" before garments) the name of Saul is introduced, as if to indicate that the blood of the martyr was the seed of the Church in producing its greatest champion and the one designed to carry to completion the work so well begun by Stephen—that of freeing Christianity from the limitations of

Judaism and making the Christian Church the spiritual home for believers to the ends of the earth. Saul heard Stephen's great sermon and witnessed his final testimony and cannot have failed to be impressed. From that time forward he was, probably, under conviction and his restlessness only ended when he met the Holy One, the Exalted Messiah, on the Damascus road and stepped into the breach in the Christian ranks, which he himself had had a hand in making; and by unprecedented zeal and devotion to Christ and His cause, he endeavoured to make up for the loss that cause sustained through the unkindly end of the faithful Stephen.

The fact that the apostles did not come in for their share of the persecution that arose at the time of Stephen's martyrdom, would seem to indicate that the persecution was local, confined to the Hellenistic party, and that the apostles were out of sympathy with this party, considering them indiscreet or too aggressive. But their aggressiveness led to a move onward. They were themselves scattered to Samaria and even beyond the bounds of Palestine, with the result that many professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and were added to the Church. Their example made the apostles also move, so that their Master's commission began to be fulfilled in right earnest.

From this time forward Gentiles were received into the fellowship of the Christian community on their professing faith in Christ and on their being baptised. That it was the Divine intention that they should be so received was indicated by a special revelation to Peter in the case of Cornelius, and to

others by the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed on Gentiles as well as on Jews, showing that God was no respecter of persons, but received the Gentile as well as the Jew who exercised faith towards His Messiah. But in the minds of many Jews the admission of Cornelius and of other individual Greeks was regarded as an exception to a clearly defined rule. Considerable numbers of devout Gentiles in Antioch and elsewhere, the God-fearing men, like Cornelius, who had been in constant attendance on the worship of the synagogue—attracted by Hebrew scriptures, theology and morality, but shrinking from circumcision and the burdensome obligations which it entailed—welcomed the Christian preaching which offered baptism without circumcision, as a means of entering into covenant with God. The admission of these into the Church aroused no marked jealousy among the Jews. But the situation was completely changed when Paul made a direct appeal in South Galatia from the Jews to the Gentiles, and the latter responded most enthusiastically. Apprehension was then felt by Jewish Christians that the new departure would mean the sweeping away of all loyalty to the old faith. It was feared that the Gentile element would prevail, and to the Jews, who had been so religiously exclusive and to whom the prescriptions of centuries had forbidden intercourse with the uncircumcised, the thought of communion with such people was extremely abhorrent and the prospect of Gentile supremacy intolerable. Hence the feeling that prompted a last desperate effort to impose on Gentile converts the rule of circumcision with its attendant legal obligations, the argument

advanced being that circumcision had been and continued to be an essential condition of God's covenant, and that baptism alone was not sufficient for salvation. This claim for circumcision was put forward in Antioch by Christians from Judea, who had already disturbed the converts of Paul and Barnabas in South Galatia, necessitating the writing of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. These Judaisers pretended they had the support of the Church at Jerusalem. But Paul and Barnabas, who had so many seals to their ministry among the Gentiles, protested, realising that the contention of these agitators struck at the very existence of the Gentile congregations within the pale of the Church, and subordinated Christianity again to the fetters of Judaism, which it had begun to shake off. The issue, being once raised, called for a decisive answer, for there could no longer be any peace in mixed Christian communities until a basis of agreement had been devised. The two views of the way of salvation, put forward by the Apostles who laboured successfully among the Gentiles on the one hand, and by the Judaisers on the other, were irreconcilable. There was a danger of a disruption which threatened the very life of the Church, for a Church so constituted could not fulfil its function in the world. How could it carry the message of a Holy Saviour and a Universal Brotherhood to the world when it had, within its borders, side by side, the unlimited licence of the Gentiles and the narrow sectarianism of a Jewish Brotherhood—tied to every item of the Mosaic ritual ? The matter was, therefore, referred to a conference of the Church at Jerusalem, known as the Apostolic Council, under

the leadership of Peter, James, Paul and Barnabas. A compromise was effected, and this was embodied in resolutions ("decrees") arrived at under the acknowledged inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The resolutions not only averted the threatening schism, but finally swept away the most serious obstacle to the union of Jew and Gentile in one communion, and that without disloyalty to the laws and customs of the Fathers. Thus the council helped to form a single brotherhood, participating in the blessings of one common faith.

The terms of the treaty of peace stipulated for four rules of abstinence as an indispensable minimum for brotherly fellowship between the two sections of the Church—Jewish and Gentile. The moral and ceremonial uncleanness of the Gentiles was a stumbling block to the Jews in the way of intercourse, and the prohibitions in the resolutions embraced both kinds. But the resolutions were not laid down as essential to salvation or binding in themselves upon the Gentiles, but as necessary to avoid offence to the Jews, especially in view of the public reading of the law in the synagogues. Presented in this light, as a reasonable concession to Jewish scruples, the prohibitions were readily accepted at Antioch and elsewhere; and they were found helpful to the Church, not only in the interests of peace between the warring sections, but also in the way of combating idolatry and fostering due regard for the conscientious scruples of fellow-Christians. Paul placed the resolutions in the hands of the brethren in Asia (Acts xvi. 4), and this is the last reference to them. They were clearly meant to be temporary. Paul soon showed that he did not regard these

ceremonial rules of abstinence as permanently binding on the Church at large. For in his first Epistle to the Corinthians he treats the subject of uncleanness on a purely Christian basis—without any reference to the ceremonial law. And his open breach with the synagogue and the rapid growth of the Gentile element in the Church rendered the resolutions obsolete.

The mission to the Gentiles, to which we have referred, marked a most important stage in the development of the Christian movement. "We recognise here," says Prof. Moffatt in the "Approach to the New Testament," p. 100, "a watershed in the New Testament. Matters took a turn which proved momentous for the fortunes of the new religion. And you will observe that these innovators (the original missionaries of the new departure) were not led by any Apostle, nor, so far as we know, did they possess any explicit word of Jesus which warranted them in undertaking such a revolutionary mission. Historically, we allow that their impulse was true to the Spirit of Jesus Himself, that they were doing something far more important than they realised, and that their action showed a deeper insight into the genius of the Gospel than any of the Apostles had as yet evinced. The Church at Antioch became the headquarters of this liberal Christianity . . . Paul worked out its theology."

Paul's experience on the Damascus road, when he met the Risen Christ and came under the spell of His personality, led him to ask what was the precise value of Judaism as a religious system? The great success of his mission among the Gentiles would have helped him to find the correct answer. He

saw that the true religious life, " the fellowship of men with God and with one another in love," was possible only by faith in God's Messiah, whose acquaintance he had made in so marvellous a manner. To him justification by the works of the law was impossible. Justification could only come by faith through which there was imparted, to the believer in Christ, the righteousness of God—a righteousness which had a way of realising itself in the believer's life. Forces, not belonging to the justified, became operative within him for he was " in Christ," drawing life from Him, as the branch receives its nourishment from the stem. The new attitude towards God in Christ, the filial attitude, makes it possible for the forces that make for righteousness to take possession of him, so that he is on the right path, that of the " justified," and is safe for the Kingdom of God. In fact, he is already in it, and experiencing its powers and blessings—joy, love, peace, etc.

The Jew held he was right with God because of his birth, and that every Gentile must join Judaism to get right with God or be saved. That is to say, every Gentile must be circumcised, for nothing else would avail him, neither moral law, nor prayer, nor penitence, nor almsgiving. No Jew would go into Gehenna, for " Father Abraham " would save all his descendants. The Divine election of the Jews to be a blessing to all the nations was regarded as an absolute election, independent of the Chosen. Others thought that one could work out one's own righteousness by obedience to the moral law. Paul set his face against these views, against the former, as limiting the extension of the Gospel or, at least,

perpetuating a caste system in the Church, and against the latter, as a hopeless task, since the keeping of the moral law implied motive as well as outward action. Faith was required to touch motive and bring the soul into contact with God, to the level on which is heard not "*I must* but *I will*" keep my Father's Commandments. Righteousness or salvation was a gift, and faith was required to rear and keep it from holding the place in the individual's life which belonged to God.

The relation of the Gospel to the Law or Judaism is expounded in the Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and most fully in Romans. Paul's conflict with Judaisers continued in more or less intense form till his death. We find echoes of the struggle in Philippians and Colossians. In fact, whenever he sees externalism, involving a breach with Christ, he attacks it as a form of Judaism. He sees the Colossians, for example, imbibing teaching which, logically developed, will end in the denial of the fact and need of the Incarnation, a sort of belated Mosaism. He demonstrates to his readers that the only way to advance to knowledge and holiness is communion with the Divine Head of the Church, and the realisation that He is absolutely unique in the work of redemption, and also in the physical and metaphysical worlds. The Epistle to the Hebrews follows the great Pauline Epistles, showing clearly that to preach Christ is to ring the knell of the Law. By the time the Fourth Gospel was written the breach with the synagogues is a fact of years' standing, and the Evangelist's own attitude to them is one of open hostility. Paul was conciliatory and hopeful, but in the "intervening

years the breach had become irreparable. The Church had cast in its lot definitely with the Gentiles and had learned to regard the Jews as declared enemies with whom no peace was possible." (Prof. E. S. Scott's "Fourth Gospel," p. 84.)

The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., meant the abolition of Jewish sacrificial worship, the elimination of the Sanhedrim and the power of the Sadducees, so that Judaism passed into the hands of the Pharisees. The bitterness between the Jews and their Christian kinsfolk greatly increased because the Christians—knowing the predictions of Christ—did not strike a blow in defence of the temple. Before the siege of the city began, the faithful Jewish Christians fled to Pella, while those who were more political than Christian remained behind in the capital with the Zealot party. In the time of Hadrian there were, according to Epiphanius, seven synagogues and one Christian Church in Jerusalem. A vigorous controversy went on between the Jews and the Jewish Christians. Still the Christians worshipped in the synagogues, but were not allowed to enter the pulpits. The Christians of Palestine were then ruled by "Bishops of the Circumcision," and were orthodox believers in the pre-existence of Christ before the Creation and in the "Dispensation" of His incarnate life. The city was rebuilt by Hadrian, but on the site of the temple of Jehovah rose a temple to Jupiter and close to Calvary one to Venus. The Emperor prohibited at the same time the rite of circumcision. A revolt immediately broke out, for the Jews felt horribly outraged. Their second

Ezra, Rabbi Akiba, fanned their discontent and at last there appeared a false Messiah, Bar Cochba. For two years a guerilla warfare was maintained in the hills of Judæa when mercy was shown sometimes to pagan captives by Bar Cochba but none to Christians who refused to blaspheme the name of Jesus. At length the rebellion was quelled and the city taken and destroyed. The Jews were forbidden to enter the city under pain of death, and Christians who dwelt in it elected an uncircumcised Bishop. Thus for years, Judaism and Christianity had been getting more and more separated, owing to the hatred of the former and especially since that important step was taken at Antioch in Pisidia, when Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews: "It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles!" (Acts xiii. 46). Gradually Christianity was getting rid of what in Judaism was narrow and exclusive, so that it could no longer be regarded as a sect of Judaism. At last, the stage was reached where the two systems finally severed. Judaism became less and less like Christianity; as the years passed, "a hardening in part hath befallen Israel," but it is only, as Paul puts it, "until the fulness of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 25). There is still a hope that Judaism will turn towards Christianity and acknowledge it as the religious goal toward which God has been leading Israel and the other nations of the earth.

Recent events in Palestine, which have placed Jerusalem and the Holy Land—in the hands of the

Turks since 1547—under the protection of Christian nations, together with the movement known as Zionism, which, in addition to its original aim as a spiritual and nationalist revival among the Jews, has lately superadded a political object—the setting up of an independent Jewish State in that country—have led to serious thoughts among members of the Christian Church as to great possibilities in the near future for the Kingdom of God in that part of the world. The question is asked by both Christians and Jews, Has this movement the sanction of the Scriptures? Many in both ranks answer "Yes." But can we, in the light of history and the leading of Providence, say that God's redemptive purpose for mankind is dependent on such an event as the contemplated return of the Jews to Palestine?

One of the notes, most frequently heard in the prophecy of the Exile Period and after, is the promise of Israel's restoration to the Land of their Fathers. The exiled everywhere are to be brought home. "I will assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the despised of Judah . . . I will return their captivity," are the outstanding expressions of this hope. The heathen nations are to furnish an honourable escort for the journey. The scattered exiles are to be established once more in their native country, while the wealth of the nations is to pour in "to repair the ruins." The city will be rebuilt and the palace re-inhabited. The cheerful sounds of social life will be heard once more. Jerusalem will become the shrine of the true religion; "they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain." Not only Jews, but also the nations of the world, shall repair to Jerusalem to receive

instruction, to keep the Jewish feasts and offer Jewish sacrifice. Over this restored community will reign the righteous off-shoot of David's race. The old division between north and south will be forgotten. "One King shall be King to them all and they shall all have one Shepherd." We see the dawning of an era of union, peace, and righteous living.

This picture is drawn by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah. But is it not evident that these prophets, while contemplating a literal return of Israel to Canaan, mingle an ideal element with their accounts of what is to happen? They are immediately concerned with a transformation in the outward fortunes of these people, but they are able to see a larger plan and wider issues. They are all the time absorbed in the thought of God, and it is His purpose they are seeking to impress upon the world, together with Israel's own contribution toward the divine result. This purpose is the preservation of the faith, the extension of the religion of the true God, the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

This ideal the prophets clothe in a form determined by the conditions prevailing at the time. They think in concrete symbols and use figurative language, describing the destiny of Israel in the terms of the Dispensation under which they live. At the time most of the Jewish people were scattered and had to be gathered home. The heathen nations were hostile and had to be punished or even destroyed, if necessary. Babylon would need to be overthrown, Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia made to suffer for their enmity towards Israel, Tyre

and Egypt for their pride and self-deification. "I will make a full end of all nations" (Jer. xxxiii. etc.) that is to say, the heathen would have to be converted to Judaism or become slaves to the Jews in Palestine (Is. xiv. 2, lx. 10-12).

We see, therefore, that the restoration is to take place under the conditions of the time, and that in the immediate future. The old era is passing away and a new era is about to begin. Jehovah is to intervene. "The day of the Lord is at hand and hasteth greatly" (Zeph. i. 4).

The exile, according to Jeremiah, is to last seventy years, and, according to Ezekiel, forty years. In Deutero-Isaiah, we see Cyrus on his way to Babylon. The fall of the great city is evident, and the release of the Jewish captives and their re-settlement in Canaan is at hand. The prophets must be understood to use imaginative figures in portraying the splendour of the New Jerusalem and the fertility of the re-settled land, but they anticipated, without a doubt, an actual restoration under the conditions which they describe. They expect the fulfilment, in time and manner, to be in correspondence with the prediction. When they mention seventy or forty years they, no doubt, mean round numbers, a fact we have ever to bear in mind when we meet with numbers in figurative or Apocalyptic language. Exact dates are not insisted on. The events passing before the minds of the sacred writers are charged with moral meaning: "There is a conflict of principle to be waged and the final issue is sure, and because it is sure, it is not far off."

Did the course of history follow the lines

anticipated by the prophets? To some extent it did. The hopes of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah were partially fulfilled, for Jews did return to Palestine after Cyrus had taken Babylon. Jerusalem was restored and the temple rebuilt and became the sanctuary of Judaism for centuries. But the reality was very unlike the vision. Bitter disillusionment was the experience of the miserable remnant who struggled on in Jerusalem, waiting for the homage of the heathen described by the prophets. The fulfilment came so much short of expectation that religious minds began to devote themselves to the interpretation of the prophecies, and developed an elaborate system of apocalypse by way of getting over the difficulty of the non-fulfilment of prophecy.

Are we still to expect a fulfilment of these prophecies of restoration of the dispersed Israel to Palestine? As we have seen, the predicted restoration means that the heathen shall be annihilated if they do not submit to Judaism; and according to Isaiah xi., when the Israelites return "they shall fly upon the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, together they shall spoil the children of the east; they shall put forth their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them." If the restoration takes place, so must the vengeance. We cannot pick out what we like for fulfilment and leave out what is not agreeable to modern taste. Can we imagine Jerusalem becoming the centre of the world's worship and all the nations flocking into it to offer legal sacrifices, the Jews to be the priestly caste and all the other nations merely laity?

Long ago it was seen that a literal interpretation was impossible. Hence it became fashionable to allegorise the prophetic language, treating Jerusalem, Zion, Israel, as symbols representing the Christian Church; Babylon, Egypt, and the Philistines, etc., as standing for a hostile world; while Palestine pointed to spiritual privileges. But this way of treating the subject is unsatisfactory, being a method of exegesis which is historically false. For when the prophets declared Babylon would be overthrown and Israel restored, they meant what they said. What then is the solution of the difficulty?

A principle, which is ever to be borne in mind in our study of the Kingdom of God, is, that in the Scriptures there is a distinction between the form and the substance of ideals. The form in this case was naturally determined by the circumstances which prevailed at the time when the prophets wrote. But these circumstances have passed away, while the ideal alone has remained. The prophets watched the facts before them, but their vision was ever upon moral and religious ends. They were certain Israel would be preserved to keep alive and make known the true religion. Jehovah had a purpose in history and Israel a destiny to accomplish. There would inevitably be a conflict, but Jehovah's cause would prevail. His moral rule would be displayed and His Kingdom established. "Israel was preserved and in part restored to Palestine. So far, the prophecies had corresponded with the form. . . . But the large context of the ideal —the establishment of the Kingdom of God—had nothing to do with the return of the Jews to their land, and should it take place, as it is doing, it has

no meaning in a spiritual sense; for God's redemptive purpose in respect to the world is independent of such an event."

The form into which the prophets cast their hopes for the future belonged, as we have seen, to the conditions of their day. The form can only be fulfilled, if it be possible for these conditions to be reproduced. On the other hand, the substance of the prophetic ideal requires for its fulfilment another and a wider dispensation. "To us," says Robertson Smith, "it is clear that the ideal of a Kingdom of God upon earth could not be fully realised under the forms of the Old Testament. The Dispensation of the New Testament is not a mere renewal of the days of David in a more perfect form. The Kingdom of God means now something very different from a restoration of the realm of Judah and a re-subjugation of Philistia and Edom, Ammon and Moab, under a sovereign reigning visibly in Zion" ("Prophets of Israel," p. 305). "It would be well to remember that the transition from the national creed of Judaism to the universal gospel of Christianity was accomplished in the name of Judaism and by adherence of Judaism" (Hamilton's "The People of God," Vol. II, p. 58). Their task was to follow the path which the prophets had pointed out and to show whither it led. When the Founder of the Christian Church started His disciples on their career of witness-bearing, He made them begin at Jerusalem and then go into all Judæa and Samaria unto the ends of the earth (Acts i. 8). There was no breach with the past. The appointment of twelve disciples, as it were, to represent the twelve tribes, and of the seventy, the seventy elders

of Israel, seemed to be meant to closely connect, in the minds of the Jews, the intimate relation between the new Israel and the old—a coherent advance from prophecy to fulfilment. When Jesus spoke of the national aspect of religion He announced the destruction, not the restoration, of Jerusalem, and contemplated the establishment of a Kingdom confined to no race or country—a Kingdom broad-based upon the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. Thus we are clearly taught that God no longer deals with man on the principle of nationality. "What Ezekiel foresaw in the form of a national restoration will be accomplished in a world-wide salvation, in a new heaven and a new earth where there shall be no more curse." (Skinner on Ezekiel.)

The Apostle Paul, than whom there was none in the Early Church better qualified to understand the meaning of Old Testament prophecy and appreciate the outlook of the Jews, deals with this problem in the Parable of the Olive Tree (Romans xi.). According to him, the Church of God, described by that figure, is one continuous body from Abraham to Christ. This implies that the Christian Church inherited the privileges of the Jewish Church. Some of the Jews, the natural branches, through their want of faith in the expansiveness of their own religion, forfeited their place of privilege, and in their place branches from a wild olive (Gentiles) were grafted. Thus Gentile Christians became members of the one continuous Church of God. But when the "fulness of the Gentiles" has come, the Jews will be all saved. Such is the hope of Paul regarding his own people—a hope based

on his Christian faith. His nation had enjoyed many high privileges and discharged many useful functions. Even the revelation in Christ is not independent of God's revelation to His ancient people. The world owes a deep debt to this people. Surely, it was not vain to hope that they would return and be found once more in the line of God's purpose of redemption for humanity.

The Apostle Paul says nothing with regard to salvation through a restoration of the Jews to Palestine. He considers the covenant made by God with the Fathers. One of the articles of that covenant reads : " to thy seed will I give this land." But Paul makes no reference to the promise of land, but tells us that the covenant stood for spiritual privileges, and in these alone did he seem to be interested. He was, no doubt, familiar with the current Jewish expectation of a universal restoration of Israel and the establishment of a temporal Jewish Kingdom with Jerusalem for its capital. But this conception he simply spiritualises and widens.

The Jews will be restored to the Kingdom, according to the teaching of Paul, on condition of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Montefiore, in his Hibbert Lectures, p. 413, gives it as his conviction that " in orthodox Judaism the Law supplied the place of the Person of Christ in orthodox Christianity and was the almost living link between the human and Divine." There is no appearance that there is the least change of attitude in spiritual matters on the part of those Jews who are moving towards Palestine—that there is the least interest being taken in Christ. Instead, it has been stated recently, by high authorities, that those Jews,

imported into Palestine, in connection with the Zionist movement, are of a most undesirable type, not unlike the old Zealot party, who have already caused disturbances and have been placarding the Holy City with Bolshevist appeals.

Not by such means and methods are the interests of God's Kingdom promoted. Not thus are the Jews, as a people, to be expected to be "all saved." At present they are greatly degraded, absorbed in money-making and Mammon-worship. The difficulty of securing conversions to Christianity among them seems to contradict the Apostle's hope. But is not the shameful treatment they have received at the hands of so-called Christian nations largely responsible for their hardened spiritual condition and their hatred of Christianity? Let the other nations become Christian, not in name only, but in reality, and the Jews will not remain obdurate. Let favourable conditions be produced by the Christian Church, showing the "fulness" of the Gentiles has come, and God's ancient people will not prove castaways from God's Kingdom.

> "My own hope is a sun will pierce
> The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
> That after Last returns the First,
> Tho' a wide compass round be fetched;
> That what began best, can't end worst,
> Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."
> (R. Browning, "Apparent Failure," 7).

CHAPTER XI

The Christian Church and the State

When the Christian movement began, the word of the Roman Emperor was law from Persia to Britain, and from the Elbe to the Sahara. He was the head of the administrative, judical and legislative powers of the Empire. He was regarded, generally, as the providence of the people, and in the provinces, particularly, he was extremely popular and was served with ardour and loyalty, and even worshipped; for the Pax Romana[1] brooded over them, so that people could live and work with calm and easy minds, secure in the thought that they might trust in the fairness of Roman justice and in the might of Roman protection.

Religious toleration was granted to all corporate peoples. Egypt, Greece, Syria, and even Judæa could worship their own gods. But between the Jewish religion and that of the Gentiles there was a great difference. For the Gentile the day began with a religious act and continued with a series of religious acts. He was ever making signs of reverence. In fact, every action was religious. The Jews of the Diaspora, on the other hand, appeared to be without a religion, because of their not having a temple or priest or altar or ceremony except the most limited. Yet, strange as this religion looked, the Romans tolerated it; it was a *religio licita*.[2] Religious

[1] The Roman Peace. [2] A State-sanctioned religion.

toleration prevailed, and no prohibition was exercised unless religious acts led to a disturbance of the public peace. But an exception was made to this general rule in the case of Christianity. From an early period, in all probability from the time of Nero, the Christian religion was treated as illicit. Christians were treated as outlaws. If they confessed they were Christians they were condemned without trial, and their goods were confiscated. This is conclusively proved by the letters of Pliny to Trajan, and by the writings of Justin and others.

What is the explanation? In Acts the Christian Church is not distinguished from the Jewish, but is regarded as a sect of Judaism. Gallio could see no difference between a Jew and a Christian, and Felix and Festus would, probably, have dismissed the charges against Paul, if he had not appealed to Cæsar. The early persecution of Christianity came, not from the Empire, but from the Jews who were, in a sense, a state within a state, an anomoly permitted by Rome as a matter of expediency. The Jews condemned Christ in their Sanhedrin, and then, with great ingenuity, brought a political charge against Him to get the Roman procurator to inflict upon Him the Roman form of capital punishment. Stephen was accused later of blasphemy, and suffered the punishment of his alleged offence, the Roman government being too weak or indifferent to interfere. During the period 41-44 A.D., the procurators of Judea were replaced by Herod Agrippa who favoured the fanaticism of his compatriots. Hence the outburst which cost Peter an imprisonment and James, the son of Zebedee, his head. Up to the period mentioned

above, the Church, outside Jerusalem, enjoyed comparative peace as far as the Romans were concerned. The Roman officials worried neither the Christians nor themselves by resorting to coercive measures. The Gospel was first preached to the Jews and first persecuted by the Jews and, as we have already seen, their hostility became more and more intensified as time passed, for the Sanhedrin regarded Christianity as an enemy from the first. Hence the Jewish authorities persecuted the Christians whenever they could. "Synagogas Judæorum fontes persecutionum"[1] (Tertullian). The Roman officials, on the other hand, were friendly. The conflict with them at Phillippi and Ephesus was caused, not by religious or political, but by social and mercenary considerations. But by and by Christians were persecuted by the Empire propter nomen.[2] In 1 Peter and the Apocalypse this is quite manifest. In the early sixties they were regarded as enemies of the Roman law, constitution, and scheme of life and conduct; for it was then realised that Christianity was a dangerous solvent of the existing social system, not merely a set of religious and moral doctrines, but a society that demanded from its members a strict and loyal obedience. The Roman Government was very tolerant of religious opinions, but its attitude at once changed when it saw in Christianity a religion that was both exclusive and universalistic.

The reason that led to the conflict between the Church and the State was a circumstance which was sure, sooner or later, to bring to the light the

[1] The synagogues of the Jews, the sources of the persecutions.

[2] On account of the name (Christian).

essential antagonism of these two institutions as they were then constituted—the position occupied by the Emperor in relation to religion. The Empire was a great unity, and the Emperor became the symbol of that unity, a symbol which, as it grew, drew to itself sanctions which, in their nature and scope, were military, political, civil, and even religious. Those who served in the army took the sacramentum or oath of allegiance which was regarded as religiously binding. Those who took office bound themselves in the same way, and soon this obligation was extended to all its citizens. Thus arose Emperor-worship whose evil influence is seen at work in the Apostolic Age, as recorded in the Apostolic writings, especially in the Book of Revelation. It appeared first in the provinces;—of this worship and of its great popularity and extension there is ample evidence in the inscriptions and literature which have received extensive treatment at the hands of Westcott (First Epistle of John), Sir Wm. Ramsay ("Letters to the Seven Churches"), Dr. Dill ("Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius") and Friedlander ("Sittengeshichte.")

The Emperors were usually trained to a high estimate of their function. Seneca, for example, drew for Nero an ideal picture of his function, pointing out that he had succeeded to a vice-regency of God on earth, that he was the arbitrator of life and death, that on his word the fortunes of citizens and the happiness or misery of people depended. In a word, the emperor was the one hand that held the world-empire together and in life. Thus the emperors came to look upon their office as Divine, one emperor causing himself to be spoken of as

dominus et deus noster.[1] And this was the power which the Church had to face in the early centuries, the symbol of all that was great and good in the eyes of men, the centre of a paganism which, as Friedlander points out, "was not a decrepit, moribund society, but a paganism capable of gathering great forces, renewing its faith and fortifying itself with all the resources of civilisation to fight its battle with the Church. In fact, Cæsar-worship was a real religion of salvation to the people; Cæsar was their saviour and earthly providence." Two great ideals met, the one spiritual and the other worldly, and the centuries decided the issue.

The well-known words of our Lord: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's (Mark xii. 17, xxii. 21, Luke xx. 25), and "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36) indicate His view on the relation between the civil and spiritual powers, between the State and the Church. But in view of the pretensions of Cæsar, which we have considered, how was it possible for Him thus to express Himself in regard to Cæsar? He must have spoken under exceptional political circumstances. After the year 37 A.D., the sentiment embodied in the saying could not have possibly come from Him, for after that date Cæsar claimed everything, and God was left with nothing but the name, and even that He had to share with Cæsar.

After the death of Tiberius the Roman Emperors were officially deified by a vote of the Senate, and even Domitian, who was refused celestial honours beyond the grave, enjoyed in his lifetime the title of "Lord God." In this emperor-worship is a

[1] Our God and Lord.

deep-rooted human instinct—meant for higher exercise—as shown by the recurrence of similar phenomena throughout the ages when similar conditions prevailed. In Protestant England and Germany we find it. Cranmer in England introduced a "theory of ecclesiastical authority which resolved all its spiritual, as well as temporal powers, into the royal supremacy," and taught that the monarch, in the person of Henry VIII, was the highest channel of sacramental grace! Michilet compared the same monarch to a second Messiah, and the great Luther grovelled before him, writing to him in these terms: "I fear to raise my eyes in your majesty's presence . . . I am but dregs and a worm." What a contrast is afforded by the Scottish reformer, Knox, of whom the regent Morton, representing the State, said over his mortal remains: "There lieth one who never feared the face of man." Where but in the atmosphere he had breathed would one naturally expect to find an early realisation of the ideal relation between Church and State: "Mutual jurisdiction with mutual subordination?" Luther had a hand in giving titles to German princes, which lifted them to rivalry with Christ, as Henry VIII was raised in England,—a close parallel to the false Christs of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew,—a parallel which affords a clue to the interpretation of the Anti-Christ of the Johannine Epistles. The Anti-Christ is to be understood as a general name, signifying an opponent or rival of Christ. And the danger of the Anti-Christ is one that will be ever with us, as long as human courtiers, whether of autocracies, oligarchies or democracies, will exalt earthly

sovereigns to the thrones which Deity alone can fill. The sad thing is, that, in Rome and elsewhere, the blasphemous flatteries of courtiers and poverty-stricken poets were taken seriously and accepted and acted upon by the ruling powers, as if indeed they were gods. But one great prince, at least, resisted the temptation and disdained such pretensions—Tiberius. He was a man upon whom posterity has not yet said the last word. Under him the imperial provinces were, as a rule, better governed than those over which the Senate exercised control. His unpopularity in Rome and Italy was due to his efforts to correct morals and remove abuses. In Judæa, Pilate was prevented by him from offending the religious prejudices of the rabbis, and the policy adopted towards the Jews was rendered easy by Tiberius' refusal to have Divine honours paid to himself. This emperor, who shared with his senate the government of the State and disdained the blasphemous flattery of his subjects, was a ruler who made the position of the Jews tolerable—even under foreign domination. Hence the famous reply of Jesus to His enemies was possible in the reign of this emperor, who was, theoretically at least, a temporal, and not a spiritual, prince. These facts elicited in regard to Tiberius and to his attitude toward the religious susceptibilities of the Jews, make also intelligible the words of the Chief Priests to Pilate: "We have no king but Cæsar." Both of the sayings would have been incomprehensible, if uttered, say, under the next monarch, the mad Gaius, to whom the Romans rendered Divine honours, and whose death saved the temple in Jerusalem from being profaned by a statue of the emperor.

The words of Jesus which have been considered, together with the remark to Pilate as to the source of his power, show that to Jesus' mind the State and the Church were two institutions of God's appointment, fulfilling different functions for the well-being of man, having claims which they had a right to see acknowledged in their respective spheres. Paul, who knew well the mind of His Master here, as well as elsewhere, appreciated the teaching of Jesus' memorable sayings. His own attitude to the State is one of appreciation of its protection and the facilities it afforded for the propagation of the Gospel of the Kingdom. He is proud of Roman citizenship, which has more than once served him well, when he was exposed to insult and danger.

There are two classical passages in the Pauline writings bearing on the relationship which Christians ought to maintain towards the civil power—Rom. xiii. 1-7, and 1. Cor. vi. 1-5. In the former passage Paul impresses upon his readers the facts of the Divine appointment and authority of the civil magistrate, while in the latter he rebukes the Corinthian Christians for taking their disputes before the secular courts. The teaching seems contradictory, but it is not so.

In the Apostle's view the heathen judge was "unrighteous," not because he was bad in himself, but inasmuch as he belonged to the non-Christian world which, in Christian terminology, was unrighteous. Those outside the Kingdom of God were thus described (Rom. ix. 30, 1 Cor. xvii. 15). But at the same time he regarded the Gentiles as the off-spring of God (Acts xvii.28-29) and the objects of His care. They had a certain knowledge of Him,

and with the aid of the light of nature or the law written on the heart, some of the heathen had performed duties enjoined by God as their conscience testified (Rom. ii. 14, 18 and 26). They had an ethic which did not, as a rule, contradict the Christian ethic, but only lagged far behind it. Accordingly, there was a sense of duty possible, on the part of the Gentile State, which might be crude, but contained some noble elements, such as the sense of responsibility for the peace and well-being of society and the determination to uphold these by the only means at its disposal—the sword. The Gentile State was thus the servant of Him who accepts and uses, for good, all services honestly rendered from a sense of duty. The imperial government was, like the Assyrian of old, but from higher motives, the rod of God's anger for the punish-punishment of the evil doer. So the Christian did not require to retaliate on his enemy (Rom. xii. 4). The laws and magistracies of heathen society were a divinely ordained system of checks for the purpose of repressing evil. That system did not embody the full and final policy of God for the conquest of sin : for those carrying it out did not know the saving love of God and the efficacy of self-sacrifice as a moralising force. The perfect instrument for the abolition of evil was Christianity. A good Christian ought to respect and give obedience to the law and recognise the civil magistrate as God's minister. As a Christian, the law should not trouble him. In fact, he should never be under the necessity of appearing before the magistrate to get disputes, as between Christians, settled. The failure to have differences composed otherwise was a confession of weakness,

and a contradiction of the brotherly love Christians professed. Great harm was done to the cause of Christ when matters which ought to be settled in a brotherly fashion were brought into the civil court for settlement. This was happening in Corinth. In other places the patient bearing of Christians under wrong did much to impress the pagan community and to win converts to Christ. According to the Pauline scheme of things the Christian should never have to appear before the bar of the civil magistrate. The fact that he pursued a stricter standard of ethics meant that, unless he failed grievously in his Christian duty, he would never be found an offender against the far less strict code of heathen morality. "The rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil. And wouldst thou have no fear of the authority? Do good and thou shalt have praise from it. . . . But if thou doest evil be afraid." The Christian, strictly speaking, did no evil, and unless falsely accused he, normally, came not under the magistrate's jurisdiction. So we may conclude that the passage in Romans was written to check a tendency in the early Church to renounce, in the name of Christian liberty, all the usual discipline of common life.

Under normal conditions Christians never appeared in civil courts as plaintiffs, even when injured by pagans. This we gather from the Apostolic writers and the early Fathers. In the case of Paul, he was already in the hands of the law when he appealed to Cæsar. As Tertullian puts it, the Christian was a "filius pacis cui nec litigare conveniet[1] ("Corona Militis.") If the wrongdoer

[1] A son of peace to whom it is unbecoming to go to law.

was a fellow Christian, the rule was to appoint a Christian arbitrator. In a matter between two of the faithful followers of Christ the heathen magistrates had, ideally speaking, no jurisdiction; they were reckoned of no account in the Church" (1 Cor. vi. 4). They were only men whose function was to uphold a standard of conduct which the members of the Church were supposed to have already far transcended.

So far, Paul had not been interfered with, on the part of the State, in regard to the subject of his preaching. He was not persecuted "for the name" nor asked to worship the emperor. Political power is a gift of God but, if used wrongly, Paul was not the man to say "submit"—when submission meant disloyalty to Christ and dishonour to His cause. It is very doubtful if he would feel proud of his Roman citizenship if he lived in the days when Rome was "drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," when the seer of Patmos saw "the beast and his image" being worshipped, and this very cult used as a test—as was the case in the reign of Domitian—for discovering whether a person was a Christian or not. Times had changed since the days when Paul found himself at Ephesus on friendly terms with the priests of the Imperial cult. The time has now come when the Church and the State are engaged in a vigorous conflict in which the Church is destined to win. How did the Church prevail? In the words of Dr. Glover ("Jesus of History," p. 213), "the Christian outlived the pagan, outdied him and out-thought him." Though the State changed its attitude towards the Church, the latter did not alter its principles or its attitude.

It sought the removal of evil in the only way it saw possible—by the change of character. Hence the Church always prayed for the civil magistrate, even when he was a persecutor (1 Tim. ii. 1-2, Titus iii. 10, 1 Peter ii. 13-17). In the sub-Apostolic age Paul and Peter were followed by Clement and Polycarp (Clement's Epistle to Corinthians, 60-61, and "Polycarp ad Phil," 11.) The teaching in Revelation on this subject is in an Apocalyptic framework. The method of dealing with men is not, in this matter, that of Christ—that of love, slow and patient and sure of victory, but the impatient one of the Apocalyptists who were ever crying "How long?" The feeling is one which many good Christian people experienced in the time of the recent Great War—not the highest, but one that was excusable in exceptionally dark and trying circumstances, and when faith was reeling. It was not recognised as a high Christian sentiment and, consequently, the Church did not encourage it in relation to the State, but followed the plain Pauline and Petrine teaching; sublimating the desire for vengeance and a dramatic destruction of evil, into the effort to win the sinner for the Kingdom of God, with the Divine message of love that never faileth and that hopeth and believeth all things for all men.

CHAPTER XII

The Christian Church and Its Gospel

In the estimation of Paul the Gospel which was the primary instrument for the conquest of paganism was summed up in Christ—the King: and what makes this great Apostle's contribution to our knowledge of Christ so precious is, that he tells us what he thought regarding Him, not in the form of abstract theologoumena or categories appropriate enough for the study, but in the way he preached Him. He tells us the facts that made the Gospel, on his lips and pen, the power of God unto salvation to every one who believed. The Messiah in the preaching of Paul was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh, declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. i. 3, 4). Therein is contained the reason why, as we study the life of the Apostle from the time he made the acquaintance of the Risen King on the Damascus road, we discover the humility, amounting to complete abasement, of this proud Pharisee whenever he mentions the Christ. He is the "slave of Christ Jesus"; and when he is describing himself thus he is, by implication, calling Christ Lord, and that in the most complete sense which can be ascribed to that word (Cf. Rom. xvi. 8). To him the Risen and Exalted King has the right to rule, with no limit to His right. Paul had, in a word,

made the discovery that the Jesus whom His nation rejected is both God and man. It was this discovery that changed the Apostle's life and character, and through him and others changed the life of the communities where the Gospel was preached and the Kingdom of God was established. For, "while the character of the deities of ancient Greece and Rome mattered little to the worshippers, and as little that of Confucius and Buddha and Mohammed, in the Christian religion it is otherwise. Its whole import and saving power depends upon the answer to the question, what think ye of Christ —the Founder of the Church—whose Son is He?"

Prayer is offered to the Christ, conjointly with God the Father. Christ is not only a channel through whom grace and peace flow to believers, but also the source of the blessing. Bousset remarks that "adoration of the Kurios (Lord) stands in the Pauline communities side by side with adoration of God, in unreconciled reality." Paul leaves nothing in doubt. Alike in his prayers, benedictions, and epistolary addresses he puts the Christ on a complete equality with God, the Father. For the purposes of prayer and the bestowment of grace they are both one to him, as illustrated in the words: "Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. viii. 4-6).

Paul tells us clearly what was the substance of his Gospel—"the Son of God . . . Jesus Christ our Lord." He expressly says that he preached Christ as "Our Lord," the Divine Christ that the eye of faith cannot distinguish from God. To Him prayer is addressed as to God. To Him believers look, as the source, in common with God,

of all spiritual blessings. This, the highest designation, was, according to him, as the language of Phillippians ii. 9 implies, a designation that marked Christ out as the object of worship. It is the title that is most appealing, which tells us what Christ is to us. He is our Lord on whom all our hopes are set for this life and that which is to come.

Paul associates the title "Lord" with that of "Son of God" in describing the Christ he preached. The designation, "Son of God," does not say what He is to us but what He is in Himself. He is in Himself the Son of God, and it is because of this that He can be, and is, Our Lord. Thus the Apostle presents to us the Lordship of Christ as rooted, not in any adventitious circumstances connected with His historical manifestation, nor in powers or dignities conferred upon Him or acquired by Him, but fundamentally in a metaphysical designation, and tells us what Christ is in His being of being; and Bousset admits that from the earliest days of Christianity the term "Son of God" was equivalent simply to "equal with God" (Cf. Mark xiv. 61-63, and John x. 31-39). But while compelled to allow that "Son of God" appears in Paul as a supra-mundane Being, standing in close metaphysical relation with God, Bousset would have us understand that in Paul's view Christ was not equal with God, that He was not quite God, but only the Son of God. Paul knows no such refinement. With him the maxim rules that whatever the Father is the Son is also. He does not scruple to declare this Son of God all that God is (Phil. ii. 6, Col. ii. 9), and ascribes to Him the supreme name—"God over all" (Rom. ix. 5).

Drs. Bousset, Lake, Foakes Jackson, Morgan, Rashdall and others whose teaching is bearing fruit in the Modernist movement in this country, maintain that Christ came to be called "Lord" because it was the title borne by cult gods, the title that marked them out as objects of worship. That the title was used in the pagan cults and Cæsar-worship is beyond a doubt, as shown by papyri and inscriptions, and Paul was familiar with the fact (1 Cor. viii. 5).

If all that these critics held was, that in passing from the Jewish to the Greek world, Christianity was compelled to change its language and adopt terminology in common use in the new countries in which it had gained an entry, there could be no objection to their supposition. It would only be a first century illustration of what has often happened with the missionary enterprise of the Christian Church. One instance, out of many, is the adoption of Shangte for God in China. If the Christian missionaries of the primitive Church are said to have simply commandeered the term "Kyrios" as the nearest Greek equivalent for the Jewish title Messiah, there is no objection to the theory. But if it is contended, as is actually the case, that the term Kyrios changed altogether the nature of the Christian faith, and introduced into it new ideas which had no place in the earliest Christian tradition; if it is asserted, as Morgan says, that it is responsible for the "rise of the Christ-worship" ("The Religion and Theology of Paul") and for raising Jesus to a central position in a new cult and in the esteem of His followers, the theory menaces the very foundations of the Christian faith and is destructive

of the Kingdom of God realised in Christ. The Empire, and not the Kingdom of God, would in that case have been triumphant.

It is admitted that "Jesus is the Messiah" was the sum of the creed of the Christian community while it was confined to Jewish soil, and that after the Gentiles began to be "added to the Church," "Jesus is Lord" became the common formula. But we hold that the title was in use long before the mission to the Gentiles took place. In fact, the first part of Acts and the Synoptics would need to be re-written to get them to square with this hypothesis, that it was only when Christianity came into contact with the religions of the Gentile world that Christ began to be called "Lord" and was worshipped as a Deity.

The early part of Acts, which is regarded by the ablest New Testament scholars as reliable history—even so advanced a critic as Schmiedel admits this—gives the clearest and strongest evidence against the theory in question. The title "Lord" was given to Christ by the earliest Christians. "God hath made Him Lord and Christ" (ii. 36). "The Lord added to the Church those that were being saved" (ii. 47). In chapter viii., of which Harnack has no doubt, occurs the expression: "They had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." So in ix. 10-15 and x. 28, all proving that before there was a Gentile mission, Christ was the object of the Church's worship. The use of the name which in the Old Testament denoted Jehovah points in the same direction (iv. 12, ix. 14-21).

Further, these critics seem to forget entirely the influence upon the Jerusalem Christians of the Holy

Spirit, regarded by them as the gift of the Exalted Jesus. "It had in their thoughts a specially eschatological significance, but it was in their actual experience far more than a mere earnest of the future. It was a reality which dominated and possessed them, a transforming presence by which they were moulded. The Spirit was the Spirit of Jesus, and if the Spirit was the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Jesus was the Spirit of God. The new life of the Spirit which possessed them was indeed something veritably and indeed Divine" ("Foundations," p. 158). It was not at Antioch alone that the Holy Spirit was experienced and His significance recognised. Besides, Paul is a witness, to some extent, to the Christological belief of the earliest Christians in his address at Athens (also in 1 Thess.). To quote Prof. Burkitt: "This is the gnosis that Paul brings to Athens, not eternal life through participation in the Christian mysteries, but the announcement of the impending judgment in which Jesus Christ is to be judge. Its theology is that of the first generation of Christians, the men who had been Jews first before they believed in Jesus" ("Journal of Theol. Studies," XV, p. 462).

We also find the title "Lord" applied to the Messiah in Psalm of Solomon xvii. 36, "their king is the Lord, the Messiah." This may be a mistranslation, but, if so, it makes no difference to our contention, for the translator, who was a Jew, saw no objection to the title being given to the Messiah. The same expression occurs in the announcement to the Shepherds in Luke i. So there seems to be the possibility of the phrase having become a stereotyped formula before the Christian era.

Morgan's argument that the title was used only as the translation of the sacred Tetragrammaton, consequently falls to the ground. In Mark, apart from the appendix, the title occurs—" the Lord hath need of him "—and in Q we read " not every one that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father in heaven." Prof. Warfield, in his recent book, " The Lord of Glory," begins with the earliest Gospel, Mark, and finds there the title " Lord " with its full theological significance. He concludes in reference to its use in the Synoptics generally with the words: " It is clear that the term ' Lord ' is sometimes applied to Jesus in the Synoptics in height of connection which imports His deity." All the Synoptics have the quotation from Psalm cx., " The Lord said to My Lord " etc. This passage was very much in the thought of the early Palestinian Church. " Such a statement," says Prof. H. A. A. Kennedy, " was bound to suggest the title ' Kyrios ' for the Christian Messiah, and the tendency to adopt it would be intensified by the fact that ' Kyrios ' had been used in the Septuagint to translate one of the Divine names." (" Vital Forces of the Early Church," p. 110.) An incidental proof of the age and habitat of the title is afforded by the closing paragraph of 1 Cor.—" Maranatha "—" the Lord is coming." This is an Aramaic name, used in a Greek letter, evidently a reminiscence of a favourite phrase in Palestinian Church worship conducted in that language.

But even if it could not be proved that the title had been given to Christ before the Gentile mission, the position assigned to Him by the earliest

Christians implied what the title stood for in the Christian faith. They believed, as has been already emphasised, that Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. They were convinced that His death was connected with the forgiveness of sin. They equated Him with the Holy Spirit and regarded Him as the Messiah in the fullest sense of the term. They absolutely believed His triumphant Parousia was at hand. Thus it would have been natural for them who held such a high creed to term Christ Kyrios or Lord.

Finally, it may be pointed out that if the higher Christology of the Apostolic writings is derived, as is alleged, from pagan cults, it is very strange that there is no sign of the process of derivation in these writings. There is no evidence of a point of contact and a development such as is contended for. No one, with sane judgment, can imagine that the missionaries of the Cross found the heathen they sought to convert to Christianity more devoted, for example, to sacrifices than they themselves were to Christ. Did they think that Christ had to be raised to the rank of Serapis to win the world ? The idea is preposterous, and to Paul and his associates in the Gospel, the suggestion would have sounded blasphemous.

That there was a development in Christology in the New Testament no unbiased student of the Word will deny. There is a wide gulf between the simple creed of Pentecostal days—" Jesus is the Messiah " and the Christology of Colossians and the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. But the development is due, not to the reflex influence of pagan cults, but to Christian experience and the inspiration

and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The critics seem to overlook entirely the experience of Paul on the Damascus road and the sense of the presence of the Risen Christ in his life and in the lives of all who experienced " the King in them the hope of glory." Paul and John borrowed categories from current ideas and philosophies of the Gentile world in which they laboured for the honour of their exalted King, but their attitude to Him and the high thoughts of Him which they entertained, were due to the teaching of the Spirit of Christ and their own experience of the grace of God and salvation. To these two Apostles, the greatest interpreters of Christ's life and teaching, Jesus was one with God from all eternity, and God manifest in the flesh for the redemption of the world. Only such a belief and experience of the " powers of the age to come " as have been alluded to, could have kept the Christian community together and enabled it to go forward in the face of the strongest and best organised opposition ever directed against the cause of man's spiritual emancipation and salvation, conquering and to conquer till it was openly acknowledged that the empire of Cæsar was overcome by the Kingdom of God.

Paul has told us what he preached. From the Apostolic writings we can gather also what the other " delegates " of Jesus proclaimed. Like Paul and John they put the person of Christ first. They were accustomed to the teaching of the Old Testament at the centre of which was the living God. The best education for mind and spirit must be concrete, and this they had in their Scriptures. They put Jesus Christ at the centre of their teaching, and the

fact that they had " companied " with Him enabled them to speak in vivid pictures of a living person who, though removed from them physically, was ever present with them in the spirit. Stress was laid upon the Cross as a crowning example of self-sacrificing love. It is prominent in the Synoptics, Acts and the Epistles. It was understood the Cross opened the way into the presence of God—into the Kingdom. Thus the great problem of the Universe was solved—the problem after whose solution Jews and Gentiles by their different forms of religion (Judaism, Mysteries, etc.) had been groping. Sin was now forgiven. Forgiveness belonged to the very essence of Jesus' Messiahship. He claimed the power to forgive sin, to be the dispenser of the Kingdom of God. What was the Church of the Christian Community but, as Ritschll remarked, " the society of the forgiven," citizens of the Kingdom of God ? This is what Paul means when he talks of " being justified." In fact, everything was offered to Jews and Gentiles which they spiritually needed. Fear held them both. Instead, they were given love which " casteth out fear." In Jesus Christ they had all, in the shape of goodness and truth, that their hearts could long for. The conception of the Messiah was seen to link God's dealings with the Jews in the past and those in the present and unify their religious experience. It was also seen that in Him the Kingdom was wider than in Judaism, and it was through Messianic association that the Gentile Christians fitted themselves to be heirs to the great heritage of the Old Testament promises. These messengers lived as men who had a taste of the powers of the age to come (Heb. vi. 5). Their

message, consequently, was delivered with conviction and power and great results for the Kingdom of God.

This was the Gospel preached by the early Apostles of Christianity and by means of which, under God, the great triumphs of the first century for the Kingdom of God were achieved. It is no other Gospel than this that can be preached with any prospect of success in the twentieth century whose paganism is making so strong a challenge to the faith of the Christian Church. At a time when again and again the cry has been raised "Christianity at the cross-roads"—"Civilisation at the cross-roads," the Church is wise enough to be guided by Paul's stewardship of faith rather than by "The Stewardship of Faith" of Kirsopp Lake, taking the former's interpretation of the mind of Christ in preference to the latter's.

Paul's great success as a missionary of the Cross, and the fact that when the things he emphasised in his preaching were afterwards made very prominent, many were gathered into the fold of Christ, as at the Reformation in Europe, and the evangelical revivals in England, Scotland and America, prove that, in the Apostolic age, it was he, perhaps, who had the greatest insight into the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. It requires but little thought to see that Kirksopp Lake, Morgan and their confrères, are playing fast and loose with their data, and that the Christianity of the Primitive Church is not what they would have us believe—a synthesis of Jewish eschatology, Stoic philosophy, Mystery religions, sacramental conceptions and the cult of the Roman emperors. It is rather a development, along scientific lines, from the germs of the teaching of

Christ, regarding Himself and the Kingdom of God. The Messiah of the Jewish Christians became the "Lord" and "Redeemer"—"God" of the Church at large, because He was both these from the beginning of the Christian consciousness—a consciousness which took some time to express all that Christ and the Kingdom of God meant for it. Christianity owed much, in the shape of terms or categories, to other religions, but nothing more, except to Judaism, without which Christianity and the Christian Church could not have appeared when they did. It used the formulas of thought and the ideas of the world around, to work out and express its principles; and instead of being influenced, it was rather itself a powerful influence which helped in the development both of the Mystery religions and of the later Greek philosophy.

The Apostles and their preaching associates not only evangelised Jews and Gentiles, but also fully instructed believers in the things of the Kingdom of God, in terms of their commission—"teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 20). They were taught to live the religion they professed and to attend to means of grace that would help them in their religion. Those who believed that Jesus was the Christ or Lord were advised to join the Christian Community through the rite of baptism, and to keep the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him and in view of His coming back to consummate the Kingdom, and to conduct themselves in relation to their fellow Christians and the world in a manner becoming citizens of the Kingdom of God and worthy of their King. People would "take knowledge of them that

they had been with Jesus," and they were to have, like Arthur's Knights, not "a momentary likeness of the king," as they heard his words of command in reference to their mission to the world, but a permanent and growing resemblance to *their* King, —the hope that they would be like Him when He was "manifested" ever exercising a purifying and beautifying influence upon their life and character (1 John iii. 2). Thus would "the old order" change "yielding place to new" in the individual's life and in the community. The following story illustrates the new condition of things produced by Christianity in the Roman empire.

Some years ago while archæologists were engaged in excavations in the Catacombs in Rome they came on the tombstone of Senator Pudentius. But to their astonishment a number of marble slabs with the inscription "Pudentius" on them were found not far from where the body of the Senator had been laid. Why so many slabs for one sepulchre? The explanation was found in an old book. This is it. On a warm summer afternoon during the reign of cruel Nero, a Roman Senator, seated in a sedan chair, carried on the shoulders of four slaves, ascended the steep hill of the Aventine. The sun was slowly setting in a sea of gold and sapphire. The air was still and hot, the place solitary and deserted. But when the senator reached the top of the hill and looked around, he saw a lady of his acquaintance, without companion or attendant, comforting and nursing a poor female slave who was stretched on the ground, abandoned and dying. This was how Rome got rid of infirm slaves—they were carried to the top of the Aventine hill and left there to cruel sufferings and

slow death. "My lady," said the senator, "What are you doing here?" "I am tending this poor woman," was the reply. "But she is a slave," said the senator. "No, she is not a slave," was the calm and dignified reply. "She is my sister." "Your sister!" said he. "Yes," she answered, "my sister in God and in our Lord Jesus Christ." Later, the same lady taught the senator the doctrine of salvation which he accepted. His numerous slaves he would at once set free, but the law of Rome forbade him. So he treated them as brothers and sisters, caring for them and instructing them. As they died the Christian senator had them buried in the Catacombs and gave them his own family name, for slaves in the Roman empire had no name, belonged to no family, had no kinsmen or rights—they were only chattels, things to be bought and sold, starved or killed at will. Senator Pudentius had caught the Spirit of Christ; his religion was practical. Such was the religion of the primitive Church. Its members had the Spirit of Christ and were conscious of His life in them. They felt that He was still incarnate in His Church; they felt that as members of His body they were acting for Him on earth. The great responsibility of their position was realised. The ideal Church or Community was ever before their eyes, and by it they were measuring their spiritual attainments. The impact of their brotherly love and purity of life upon the heathen world was immense, with the result that Christianity went on lifting the moral tone of all the people among whom it got a lodgment, and paganism went down rapidly. But the time came when, as Bishop Gore put it lately, "Christianity was converted." For nearly

three hundred years it cost something to be a Christian, but when the world, in the shape of the Roman empire, found it impossible to put Christianity down, it adopted the ingenious policy of defeating it by adopting its name. From that time forward it cost nothing to be a Christian, but rather something not to be one. The Church went down with painful rapidity, and in three generations it reached pretty much the stage at which we find it to-day. Personal choice was eliminated from the profession of Christianity, and methods were adopted by the Church, the very opposite of those employed by Christ and His Apostles. "The Church," in the words of Prof. W. P. Paterson, "was sown in power and was raised in weakness. It was sown a spiritual body and raised a natural body." But the dynamic of the early days came back again and again, and the result was great spiritual revivals and mighty social changes. It will once more be the mighty force it was, if it stands for what Christ stood for, if it will exalt Him as heaven's omnipotent magnet for drawing men to God and to one another by the power of His unspeakable love which holds men together in the mighty grip of a holy affinity.

CHAPTER XIII

The Christian Church and Its Creed

In the "Shepherd of Hermas," a Christian document of the second century, the following passage occurs: 'A revelation was made to me, brethren, while I slept, by a very beautiful young man who said to me, 'Who do you think the old lady was from whom you received the little book?' 'The Sybil,' I replied. 'You are wrong,' he said. 'It was not the Sybil.' 'Who was it then?' I asked. 'The Church,' he replied."

One of the principal functions of the Church is to teach. It seems clear from Luke i. 4 and Rom. ii. 18 that in the early Church young Christians received regular instruction in the teaching, acts and experience of Jesus. Evangelicalism did not end then with conversion, as has often happened since—the Church becoming merely a converting agency. It is the duty of the Church to-day to resume its teaching function, instead of exhortation, or rather in addition to it, and train its members in the theory and practice of Christianity. Its creed should be intelligible, and things outgrown should be removed as the struggle in the primitive Church teaches us. The Church should lead and not follow public opinion. It should stop repeating lessons learned long ago, and should show, as it was meant to do, that revelation is ever enlarging knowledge

as new light is thrown by the Holy Spirit and by experience on God's word. The Spiritual interpretation of the word belongs to every age, and, consequently, the great fundamentals of the faith require to be re-thought in every age. The measure in which the Church does this is the measure in which it can convince the world that Christianity is something that has to do with issues, not remote, but real and near.

At a time when there is a prevalent feeling that God is remote, and that though He may have been the cause of the moral order of the world, He is rather indulgent; when religious beliefs are not the moral forces they once were; when religion is a vague optimism with nothing in it of the truth the Apostle Paul taught when he wrote to the Galatians: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh shall reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall reap eternal life"; when special forms of religion—Christian Science and Spiritualism—are manufactured to meet the fashion of the age, the necessity for lifting up Christ Crucified and emphasing the significance of the Cross, is extremely urgent. "The expulsive power of a new affection," which cleanses the life of the individual and of the community can come only thus. The Churches have been too Laodicean, with the result that the people have become so indifferent that they will not take the trouble to attend public worship or read the Scriptures.

Further, the Church is ever learning more and more about Christ through the Holy Spirit in the fields of the Divine Word and of experience, as the

scientist is continually making discoveries in the realm of Nature. There is nothing final about theology or creeds; modern Christianity demands a conception of God, big enough to meet the ever growing needs of human experience and knowledge. The final revelation of God is in Christ—in His Person and Teaching. But it is ever to be remembered that in the writings of the Old and New Testaments we have the history of that revelation in its different stages, rather than the revelation itself; that is, an account of how God has been educating His great family of the human race, and is educating and saving it still. Hence the truth in the Old Testament, the background of the Apostolic writings—and without which they would not be intelligible—is necessarily incomplete and mixed with much that is temporary. In the New Testament we have the perfect truth, but it is conveyed to us in "earthen vessels"—in forms borrowed from the times of its revelation. So the truth requires ever to be distinguished from the form; and living Churches, consequently, have their Declaratory Acts. It is not true what Schweitzer says regarding Jesus that "He belongs to His own age and cannot be transported into ours." Jesus has actually been a power in the Church through the centuries and is so still. His teaching is applicable to every age. His meaning, though He is somewhat "restrained by the apocalyptic beliefs of His time," is intelligible to all races and generations. As the Son and Vice-gerent of God, He received a direct message, independent of such beliefs. But to get into contact with the Jewish mind it was necessary for Him to use the current categories, to

convey His conception of God and His Kingdom; and these conceptions have a truth and value of their own, apart from the forms in which they are expressed, but these forms are not without their value also as they exercise a great influence on the historical development of Christianity. The Christian Church came into existence as the New Israel, the nucleus of the Chosen Community, which is to inherit the eternal Kingdom of God, when the Messiah shall have come in His glory.

In our creeds at present there is too much of the terminology of Greek philosophy, which has only been obscuring our vision of the Christ of God, and in the revised creeds the temptation, in this scientific age, to employ scientific categories must be resisted. The creeds have often failed, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ has ever commended itself to people of every nationality and stage of culture, even to the most primitive—for example, to the cannibals of the South Seas—because it meets the " upward surge of the ideal in humanity." Men find in the Christ of the Gospel what they have been feeling after, and each exclaims : " This is the ideal of my soul, in likeness to whom I shall be perfect and find peace." There is a Sir Galahad in every man, in readiness to admire, in longing to be loyal to the highest that he knows. And when the Ideal Man is presented to seeking souls, like climbing plants, men throw out their swaying tendrils to grasp Him who alone can satisfy them and lift them into the strength and beauty which characterises those living in the sunshine of the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER XIV

The Christian Church and Its Organisation

In these days there is a great dislike, on the part of many, to organised religion. A writer in the "Hibbert Journal" some months ago wrote: "Is it possible to have organised religion which is not irritatingly imperfect? Is organised religion not a contradiction in terms and inherently an unsatisfactory conception?" Quite lately a speaker at a public meeting to promote the revival of religion disapproved of organisation in connection with such work, remarking: "You cannot organise the Holy Spirit." These earnest seekers after the truth seem to be both right and wrong. The Holy Spirit is compared to the wind in His working. There is mystery. You cannot organise the Holy Spirit but you must organise for Him, as you require to have sails and have them unfurled to catch the breeze. Religion and the Holy Spirit are life, and life requires an organism at least on this sublunary sphere on which men live; and, in fact, it is impossible for the human mind to grasp the idea of life apart from organism. Where life is, it secures an organism for itself. When there is a spirit it gets for itself a body. To say that religion is possible among men without organisation is as sensible as to say that we can play our part in the world in a discarnate condition. There is mystery about religion and the

Holy Spirit, but that does not make them unreal. They have again and again passed out of the region of mystery into the experience of individual souls and communities, lifting them up toward God and binding them to Him in a knot which is kept tied and secure by the pressure or influence of association or organisation. Hence Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Christian religion and the Christian Church, from the time He drew the first disciples to Himself, provided for a fellowship in which spiritual life might be nourished and strengthened. The twelve disciples of our Lord formed the nucleus of the great Christian organisation or Church by which the Kingdom of God was to be realised on earth. When the disciples were sent out as the envoys of the King they went in twos. They were not only dependent upon Him but also upon one another for the efficient discharge of their duties as His representatives. They had been initiated into the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and as the scholar, who had learned the principles of Rabbinism, received a key on graduating, as a symbol of knowledge of those principles, so these disciples of Jesus when they graduated at Cæsarea Philippi received from their Lord and Master the key of knowledge which would ever open to faith the door into the Kingdom of God. They were so united to Him, and so conversant with the ways of God, ideally, if not actually, that what they allowed on earth would be allowed in Heaven, and what they prohibited on earth would bear the stamp of heaven's disapproval. In and through this organisation of believers in Himself was Christ to work effectually toward the "universal goal" of the world's salvation, for all the terrors of Hades,

whether assailing it as floods or forces, would not be able to frighten or overcome it (Bernard and Vacher Burch's researches as to the meaning of the Gates of Hades are interesting and suggestive—" Expositor," viii. 99-105, viii. 66 etc.) for He would triumph for them over death, " bringing life and immortality to light by the Gospel." All other institutions would pass away, but the Church would abide. Good reason that, to organise and keep together as the congregation of God's people.

After the Ascension, the Apostles and the other devoted disciples of Christ assembled regularly in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, " continuing steadfastly in prayer " and waiting for the fulfilment of the promise of the Holy Spirit. Their Lord's commission was still ringing in their ears : " Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age " (Matt. xxviii. 19-20). Their number was known—one hundred and twenty —and to this number were added those who believed that " Jesus was the Christ." They were so conscious of their need for organisation that they proceeded at once to fill the vacancy caused by the fall of Judas. They were bound to Christ by the cords of love. Their faith was revived and strengthened by the knowledge that their hope was not lost. Common ideas and loyalties, as well as common needs, kept them together. Cicero said that the greatest bond of friendship he knew was to think alike for the State. These early Christians thought alike of a Kingdom, infinitely more important than a

Roman republic or empire, and they must abide in association and for the realisation of that Kingdom.

Christ did not give to this new community of believers and worshippers an ecclesiastical constitution or authoritative injunctions concerning forms of government, clerical offices and orders, nor even worship itself. He taught those who formed it what was necessary at the time—love, humility, brotherly equality, concord and patience. He gave to them His own life, and this they were to have more abundantly when, as a result of their ten days' praying, they emptied themselves of self and opened the avenues of the soul for " the rushing of a mighty wind," the power of God in Christ for their equipment to be witnesses of their Risen and Exalted Lord and Saviour. The life they thus received was allowed to organise for itself and determine the ecclesiastical constitution and form of government and worship best suited to express it, for the good of the Christians themselves and those they were meant to influence and bring into the Kingdom of God. Neither Prelacy nor Presbyterianism nor Congregationalism can be either condemned or justified by the teaching of Jesus ; and the suggestion that during the Forty Days after the Resurrection, when He spoke of the things of the Kingdom, He gave directions regarding the smaller matters, is pure imagination. The different types of Church government are allowable because helpful to different types of people ; and, in so far as they arose from spiritual needs and were the expression of a desire to realise the Kingdom of God, they represent aspects of that great ideal. It was contrary to Christ's method of dealing with men, to lay down for His

disciples a detailed policy. The fact that the Apostles were in doubt as to how to treat the Gentiles when they believed on Christ, shows that they had not received detailed directions on this, one of the most important matters in connection with the Kingdom of God and the development of the Christian Church. They had the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, and they were to act as they were moved by the Spirit and by the light of experience. So the Church was an organisation which grew and developed according to the requirements of its members and the world it was to seek to save. It was kept together by loyalty to Christ, its King. It was separate from the world. Its members were "saints" who had a creed and a life, together with the strictest discipline, as is proved by the story of Ananias and Sapphira, and many references in the Epistles. Its brotherly love and helpfulness were shown by the interest taken by Christians in one another. The measure of the Church's generosity was the measure of its members' needs. A deep sense of the unseen, and a strong belief in the nearness of the Parousia characterised the early Christian Community, knitting the members together and filling them with enthusiasm. Of the date of the Second Coming of our Lord they were purposely kept in ignorance. The belief that it was at hand was not corrected, because it was working good, quickening in them religious and moral earnestness. Believing the fashion of the world would soon pass away, they set their affections on things above. They lived in the world but were not of it. The unknown writer of the Epistle to the Diognetus writes in this connection: "What

the soul is to the body the Christians are to the world. The soul is expressed through all the members of the body and yet it is not of the body. So the Christians have their abode in the world and yet are not of the world." The constant looking forward for the Coming of the Lord produced in these Christians a state of intense spiritual zeal which fitted the Church for its earliest and hardest tasks. "The elasticity and mobility of Christianity have been preserved by the fact that the Apostles did not realise they were building a Church that was to last through the ages" (Drs. Sanday and Headlam on "Romans"). It became the fashion in later days to ascribe to the Apostles a series of ordinances and constitutions. Any such theory is entirely inconsistent with the spirit and zeal of the time. They never wrote or worked but for the needs of their day or in response to the requirements of Jesus' teaching. They laid down great principles, drawn from the teaching of their Master, and these became the guiding principles of the Church in all ages. "The Church is adapted to the needs of every age, just because the original preachers of Christianity never attempted to adapt it to the needs of any period but their own" (Sanday and Headlam). So, as the messengers of Christ went out in obedience to the command of their Lord, full of desire to save souls from the Coming Judgment, and congregations of Christians were formed in different places, these congregations were called Churches—there was nothing in the Apostolic age corresponding to modern rival Christian churches or denominations—and, though there was no central authority to control them all, these Churches throughout Palestine,

Asia, etc., were kept together by the bonds of common faith and sympathy and an *esprit de corps* born of the Spirit of Christ. The relation of the local churches to the whole body and to one another was taught in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians and in the beautiful figures already considered. There was frequent inter-communication among the Churches, and Paul was instrumental in preventing a dual system—Jewish and Gentile—in the Christian Church by his victory at the Apostolic Council. By means of the "collection" also he encouraged unity among the churches by showing their mutual obligations and dependence. This unity is stressed in Ephesians iv. and in the Fourth Gospel. It is a unity based on the unity of God, and is, therefore, essential and transcendental, not accidental like a political or any such-like association, existing in response to the call of the social interests of human nature. In the Christian religion these instincts are not excluded, but they are shown to be insufficient to account for what happened in early Christianity—the unity of the Church being due to the teaching and gifts of its Founder.

CHAPTER XV

The Christian Church and Its Distinctive Marks

Though the Jewish Christians continued to worship with their co-religionists for some time in the Temple of Jerusalem, and in the synagogues elsewhere, there was from the beginning a separate Christian Community whose distinctive marks were Baptism, the Lord's Supper and the Teaching of Jesus, as Circumcision, the Passover and the Law were those of the Jewish Church. The Apostles, prophets and teachers, those charismatically endowed for instruction, attended to the preaching of the word and the dispensation of the ordinances of Baptism and Eucharist. The "Seven" were temporarily appointed to relieve the Apostles in the administration of charity. Presbyters were appointed at a very early stage in the Church's development. These had the general oversight of congregations and were also called "bishops" or overseers. Deacons or "helps" were appointed as the Church grew, to aid the Presbyters. The leading presbyter in every congregation probably rose to prominence, first through having to preside at the Eucharist. Conspicuous ability or the fact that he had charge of the correspondence of the congregation, or of its hospitality, or such circumstances, may have helped to bring a presbyter to the front and cause him to be looked to as a leader. The ministry, to begin with, was very simple. It developed according

to needs and circumstances. Baptism was the rite by which a convert was received into the membership of the Church, and it implied faith. It was administered only to adults and signified that the convert was turning his back upon the old life, was buried into Christ's death and raised into the enjoyment of His Resurrection life and power. Baptism was thus extremely important in the Apostolic age, as to-day it is in the mission-field. It appeared as a *sine qua non* (Fourth Gospel and appendix to Mark) in connection with entrance into the community of God. Faith was always understood, and the circumstances were such that it would be difficult to imagine how anyone could be a Christian and not be baptised. The inward change in the Christian is ever attributed to the Holy Spirit. The spiritual life is due to the Spirit and not to the water. The Baptismal formula usually employed in the primitive Church was "in the name of Christ." This fact has been laid hold of by critics in an attempt to discredit the genuineness of the commission to the Apostles in Matthew xxviii. 19-20. But it may be pointed out that the shorter form implies the larger. Christ is the Christ of God, and no one calls Jesus Christ Lord "except by the Holy Spirit."

The Lord's Supper or Eucharist was the family meal which indicated fellowship. Both it and baptism were not mere symbols, but means of grace whenever faith was exercised. It has a forward and a backward look and was calculated to intensify gratitude and expectation and foster a brotherly spirit.

Paul found these sacraments in the Christian Community when he entered it. He did not create

the conception of the sacraments nor did he borrow it from the Hellenistic world, as Wernle and Kirsopp Lake and others teach. These critics hold that the Christian religion is a mystery. We hold it is a revelation, intelligible in so far as a finite mind can grasp what is divine and infinite. Lake teaches that the religion of the pagan world in the Apostolic Age was a religion of mystery and that the New Testament was written in the atmosphere and under the incubus of the Greek mystery religions. But any unbiased student of Jewish literature will find the explanation of their existence there. The mystery religions were not at their height in the first half of the first century of our era, and it is beyond doubt that both Baptism and the Lord's Supper were administered a considerable time before the earliest of Paul's Epistles were written, or the Gospels were composed, and that the Eucharist was orally in the possession of the Church from the beginning. There is no proof that these mystery religions were known to our Lord and His Apostles. And supposing they were, they would have been so foreign to them as to play no part whatever in the formation of their conception of the Sacraments.

The ordinary Church service or form of worship was largely based on the model of the synagogue service and embraced faith, praise, prayer, the reading of the word and the preaching or exhortation.

With the aid of all these various means of grace and instruments of service, the Church was meant to be itself—and has actually been—the great instrument under God for the establishment of the Divine Kingdom or " the fellowship of men with God and with one another in love " ; and the

measure of its success is the measure in which it has revealed Christ. "To the Church," says Prof. W. Curtis in his "Croal Lectures, 1921," "Christ committed a ministry of instruction, oversight, healing and reconciliation, and a mission to mankind, evangelistic, didactic, and philanthropic. From prophecy and synagogue He took the models of His special ministry. Himself a layman, He instituted no Levitic tribe. His Sacraments looked to the Jordan and to the Upper Room, not to the temple. He left no legislation to determine the future organisation of the Church, any more than its ritual and doctrine. The organisation He left was of the simplest, and it was left full freedom to develop towards the universal goal He had in view. He would not foreclose the operation of that liberty. He bequeathed a Spirit whose possession and whose fruits constitute the supreme credential of any Church of Christians. Catholicity and Apostolicity mean something higher than external diffusion and lineal succession; they mean the missionary spirit which yearns for the winning of the whole world."

Thus we have seen what the ideal before the Church in the first century was, and how that ideal was, to a large extent, realised. The secret of its success requires to be known in every age before the Church can expect similar results. It consisted, largely, in these facts to which passing reference has been made. There existed most friendly relations amongst the members of the Church, who were united and kept together not by the mere external pressure of hard circumstances, but by an inward force of the Spirit—a common sympathy, a common aim, a common Saviour to whom they gave a common

devotion. The spiritual forces that bound them to the throne of Christ and to one another were kept at their full strength by the continuance of these Church members "steadfastly in the Apostle's teaching, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers." In the teaching of the Apostles, emphasis was laid upon the fundamentals, and liberty allowed in respect of doctrines not essential to salvation. The teaching function was recognised in the early Church and faithfully discharged. Neglect of that function leads to weakness—as illustrated in the case of that worthy body of Christians, the Society of Friends. The partial attention to it, accounts, to some extent, for the loss of influence by the Church at large in these days.

Then, in the Primitive Church, its members felt that they belonged to a large family; and they had a high sense of duty and privilege. The collection (1 Cor. xvi. 1-2), the high doctrines of eschatology, the Lord's Supper, and all the other institutions of their religion helped to make them, however far apart, loving and mutually helpful. The new life filled to overflowing the lives of all the believers. The spirit of meekness, humility, self-effacement and loving service prevailed. In the words of Principal Selbie: "This loving service was, in their estimation, a kind of third sacrament which the Christian Church would do well to celebrate with the same scrupulous care bestowed on the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. When Jesus took and girded Himself and washed the disciples' feet, He was not only leaving them a formal example; He was enshrining in a beautiful deed the spirit which was to characterise His

followers for all time." This spirit the Early Church caught, and hence its success.

The public worship, or "the prayers," was observed with all diligence, for the early Christians believed the promise of their Lord: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name there I am in their midst to bless them." They were convinced that the live coals of converted lives would lose their heat if they were not gathered and kept together.

Then, to them the name of Christ was the Sesame or magic term by which the way was opened for them through the rock of sin and unbelief to "the unsearchable riches" of the divine grace. That name was ever bringing human poverty into touch with the divine wealth, and giving men a right to the "inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away." It was the key that opened the secrets and enigmas of life and death and eternity. Further, that name, in a strange way, united the Christians of the first century to believers or members of the Kingdom of God in all the Ages of the Old and New Dispensations; for behind it was felt to be the "power of an endless life." All were citizens of the same Kingdom—Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, the prophets and all the faithful in Israel, the Apostles and all who bowed to Christ as the Heavenly King; they had drunk of the waters of the same "Rock" which followed Israel in the Wilderness and "that Rock was Christ." All shared in the blessings of the same Kingdom and had been, and were, working toward the fulfilment of the great purpose of God—the complete establishment of His Kingdom through Christ, the perfect "fellowship of men with God and with one another in love."

CHAPTER XVI

The Christian Church and Its Pressing Problems

The Apostle Paul was a great strategist in promoting the interests of the Kingdom of God. His aim was to get to the centre of the world-empire and to work from there. His gospel was one for the whole world, and he longed to preach it to all men and to share with them the joy which had come to himself on being forgiven. In chapters fourteenth and fifteenth of the Epistle to the Romans we see how he regarded the Romans as representing the whole of humanity whom he would regenerate by his message. He longs to see the Kingdom of God established, and he realises that, as for the future of the cause of Christ, much depends on the Christian Community at Rome, the centre of the world. He sees the need there is for unity and peace. Hence his prayer to God to make them be of "the same mind one to another according to Christ Jesus." The contentions among the Christians there, he sees, are hindering the work of God's salvation elsewhere; for the "city set upon a hill" may tell for evil as well as for good. How depressing and discouraging to see such strife in the Church on such vantage ground, to see people quarrelling about diet and holy days, or forming parties and drawing aloof from one another! Where were the Christian brotherhood and the signs of the presence of the Kingdom of God? What was to become of the world-wide gospel and the world-wide

Kingdom of God? Then, behind the petty quarrels at Rome was the big rift between Jewish and Gentile Christians—not unlike that between the Anglican and Free Churches in this country. But Paul did not lose heart. Neither need we. The Church was a great army capable of great exploits, though there were some disaffected ones in the ranks. And as Paul felt in those days, in reference to the advantage of the centrality of Rome as a place to work from for the effective and speedy evangelisation of the world, and the need there was for harmony among Christians there, so many feel to-day in regard to Britain and the modern world. It lies at the centre of the earth, with easy communication with all nations. If only Christians were united and enthusiastic here, how much more easily could the world be won for Christ. The benefit would soon be felt at home and to the ends of the earth. Is there any hope of seeing the forces of the Church united in our land? Yes, the prospect of Church Union is growing brighter with the passing days.

The Christian Church has never been quite free from a measure of dissent and, probably, never will be till the perfect day dawns and the shadows flee away. Dissent and separation are sometimes necessary and wholesome. But when grievances are removed, it is a Christian duty to unite again in one fellowship. The Judaisers were Christians and so were the Gnostics. They were wrong, but they did some good in that their action led to an inquiry into the meaning of the Law and the significance of Greek philosophy. These heretics also warned the Church that there might be greater danger to its

usefulness from within than from without. The result of the controversy was greater spiritual freedom, a clearer vision, and the formation of the New Testament Canon. Also the solidification of the government, institutions, and, notwithstanding many faults, a veritable divine society—the Kingdom of God, made more visible and forcible than it had ever been; Catholic, cosmopolitan, independent of all civil and national systems and organisations, and open to every race and rank. These were the outcome of a seemingly great evil.

Montanism, Donatism and Monasticism later on in the history of the Church, were protests against a lower spiritual tone and standard, and a relaxation of the stricter discipline that characterised the Church when it was smaller in number and more abounding in zeal and self-sacrifice. They also were not without their salutary effects inside and outside the Church.

Similar movements have taken place in England and Scotland in the course of the centuries, to the spiritual and perhaps political salvation of the nation. The great religious revival under the Wesleys was the saving of England from a moral and spiritual deadness that was appalling. Politically it saved the country from a worse revolution than that in France. In Scotland religion was at a very low ebb at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. In the year 1800 Robert and James Haldane, the great evangelists, made a tour of Scotland and visited Arran. On the communion Sunday, as James Haldane was sitting in the Parish Church (see *Lives of the Haldanes*, p. 26) there was a pause in the service, for none of the people seemed disposed to approach the Communion

Table. On a sudden he "heard the crack of sticks, and looking round saw one descend on the bald head of a Highlander behind him. It was the leading elders driving the poor people forward to the Table much in the same way as they were accustomed to pen their cattle at a market." Such were the religion and worship of Scotland in those days. But the Evangelical Revival and the Disruption of 1843, when the Free Church came out of the Establishment on the bosom of a great religious revival, changed the spiritual conplexion of the whole country. The brethren thus separated, through the action or inaction of the State, soon began to labour again side by side in the interests of God's Kingdom, and the thought of reunion seemed never to be absent from the minds of the two Churches. It was said that Dr. Chalmers was ready, any day, to scrap his ecclesiastical machinery for the Kingdom of God. The State that had harmed the Church again and again gradually came to realise its mistake and make amends. It has been slowly removing the barriers that stood in the way of the reunion of the main forces of the Kingdom of God in Scotland—the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church. For years these two churches have been co-operating in all good works, in mutual sympathy arising from oneness of aim. Thus they have been able to secure the atmosphere essential for union. Their representatives, meeting together in all sincerity, and viewing the whole situation, experienced no insuperable difficulty in their search for a site on which to build one great Church of Scotland—united and free.

In England a similar movement is in progress,

and though the difficulties are greater than in Scotland, there is no reason why they may not be as easily overcome. With Chalmers' readiness to scrap a few bits of antiquated ecclesiastical and doctrinal machinery, the Church of England can find itself infinitely strengthened for its great mission in the world by the company and the co-operation of those robust Free Churches which have grown up in the invigorating atmosphere of spiritual liberty. If the Lambeth proposal is seriously intended, and the moral and spiritual condition of the world is appreciated, and the necessity for united forces against the common foe realised, the Bishops should not find it difficult to discard a theory of the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments, which is largely founded on analogies, uncritically drawn by Cyprian from Leviticus, and which flourished when the Church was most under the influence of the world or pagan ideas, which grew apace as belief in the actual teaching of Jesus declined. There is nothing clearer than that the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of priests; the idea runs through the Scriptures from Exodus to Revelation. All believers are equally priests in the sight of God, and modern scholarship has confirmed this view of the Free Churches, as well as their other views as to the Church and Sacraments, as being in harmony with the teaching of the Apostolic writings. And Dr. Glover rightly asserts, in this connection, that if the Free Churches' theory of the Church, Ministry and Sacraments represents a closer approximation to the truth than the Anglican, they are not at liberty to give it up, even though the ministers have their faces saved by some undefined recognition that

they will be spared the humiliation of admitting in re-ordination that their previous ministry has been invalid, unauthorised or irregular. Speaking for the Free Churches, he expresses their attitude to the Bishops in words full of faith, hope and love: "Our principles, our experience and our knowledge of the Lord call for common service on the best lines that we know; and we believe that in opening our Churches, our pulpits, our Communion Tables and our hearts to you, we are helping Our Lord's work forward. To what further steps we may be called we do not know; the present duty is clear and the duty to follow will be revealed."

Union of Churches is in the air, not only in our land, but also in other countries. In fact, in all the English-speaking parts of the globe there has been of late years a wonderful movement toward the union of the religious forces. In Canada, for example, Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians are moving toward an incorporating union, and the Anglican Communion is likely to join hands with them.

The Church has, to a large extent, lost its authority because of its sectarianism and unnecessary divisions. Where there should be one strong voice speaking for God and for righteousness, there are several conflicting voices speaking, less for the glory of God than for the glory of self. The primary function of the Church is to produce better men. It is a character-forming instrument—an instrument for the formation of character after the fashion of Christ, the King, for the equipment and training of men for the service of humanity. Such men are required in all departments of life, and if they are not provided, the Church will have failed to give

its contribution to the reconstruction of Society. Without them, social life cannot be pure and happy, nor industrial life peaceful and prosperous. Politics, national and international, require them—men of integrity and vision who can rise above selfish and local interests and think of the common good of humanity.

The Christian Church to-day in Britain as in Rome in the days of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, holds a position of great influence, which requires to be used unitedly and wisely, for it has problems to solve, and a task to accomplish, not less difficult and intricate than those of the Early Church. The slave question and the question of the Church's relation to the Empire and paganism, were the problems which Christianity in the Apostolic Age had to solve; in the twentieth century the matter of the relation between capital and labour—between the employer and the employed at home—and the difficulty of maintaining peace among the nations abroad and hastening the era when "the sword will be turned into a ploughshare and the spear into a pruning-hook." To be equal to its part of propitiator and mediator in the world's strife, the Church must itself be united and in possession of the Spirit of the Prince of Peace. To many, the recent Great War was unthinkable till it burst upon them as a fearful cataclysm that shook faith to its very foundation—exposing the utter hollowness of the religion of so-called Christian nations and seeming to bring the work of the Church to a sudden stop. The Church has scarcely yet recovered from its shock, while its difficulties have been greatly multiplied. Sinn Fein—"for ourselves alone"—is a term familiar to all readers of the newspapers. It has

been very much with us of late years and is suggestive of a wider movement than that which it represents —an endeavour to establish a republican Ireland, independent of the British Empire and hostile to its interests—a movement in the form of materialism or selfishness and self-indulgence, which is sweeping over all lands. The war afforded opportunities for self-seeking and self-indulgence as well as for self-sacrifice; and those opportunities were taken advantage of with dire results to the life and character of Christian nations. The war did not end in November, 1918; it only assumed a new form. The materialism which caused the war—the sufferings of the war did not kill it—began next to make itself felt in the industrial sphere. Its ideal sought realisation in "direct action," but as the attempt by arms failed so also has the "strike." Trade Unionism, in which great faith was placed, is no longer regarded as a reliable instrument for promoting the interests of the working man. The advocacy of a purely selfish policy is seen to work for disintegration—whether adopted by the big trade-union or the little bodies of capitalists. At last the light is penetrating the hearts of some, with the result that they are realising that the best interests of man can only be sought and furthered under the magnetic and elevating influence of the personality of humanity's Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, and within the range of the gracious influence of the Kingdom of God. Here is the Church's work; here its opportunity.

Communism, by resorting to force, has lost its attractiveness, and Bolshevism is fast dying. Christianity is beginning now to tell in most

were, years ago, kidnapped from Africa and enslaved. To-day, the Americans are reaping a thousand-fold, in trouble and sorrow, the harvest of the crimes of the past. The rock on which great nations in the past were wrecked was that of subject-races, and it is the one on which so-called Christian powers will be wrecked, if the principles of the Kingdom of God are not applied to the methods of their dealing with such people. It is the Church's duty to see that that is done, for the *raison d'etre* of its existence is to effect that in every heart and brain shall throb the "impulse of one fraternity."

The Kingdom of God is being realised in the Church and by the Church. The story of the Senator Pudentius illustrates the new spirit and the life and conduct that came into the world through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. This was the Kingdom and it has been spreading. In these days when sections of the Church, once warring, are coming together and forming themselves into a league of Churches, there is good reason to believe that the League of Nations and all other institutions —temporary and permanent—called into being for the discouragement and abolition of war and the encouragement of what will be for the well-being of man, will be greatly vitalised, and that long strides will be made toward that happy and glorious consummation to which prophets ever looked and of which poets ever sang:

> "It's coming yet, for a' that
> That man to man, the world o'er
> Shall brothers be for a' that."

In conclusion, as the result of our study, we are convinced that the idea of a Kingdom of God not

only appeared in the Apostolic writings, but as far back as the time when it was first felt a rule of evil had set in. The Kingdom or City of God, or the Community of the Faithful, has been from the beginning the inviolate home of souls—a power in opposition to the Kingdom of darkness and evil. It was embodied in the company of the partiarchs, in Israel, God's Chosen People, and, finally, in the Christian Church. It is a City continually coming down from heaven because it is supported by Divine grace from on high. It must endure—surviving all earthly empires whose thrones rest on selfish ambition and vainglory, and from which flow rivers of human blood and tears; for it is built on the foundation of self-sacrificing love, and its sceptre is that of righteousness. In it are ever flowing streams of the water of life, which refresh and satisfy immortal souls. In this City or Church of God we see what was little more than a dream converted into a grand reality by the ministry, prayers, sacrifice, resurrection and spiritual gifts of Christ—men and women animated by His Spirit and following in His footsteps, His Spirit cleansing the life of the individual and the community bearing His name, converting the Church into a mighty power, diffusing its influence for good throughout all the relations of life, social, industrial, national and international. Only thus shall we, in this twentieth century, fit ourselves to be heirs to the conception of the Kingdom of God, entertained by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and hope to rise and join Him and them in the life that is immortal, in perfect, loving fellowship with God and with redeemed humanity.

unexpected places. In *Great Possessions*, David Lyall, a writer who is in touch with the problems of the present day, shows how the Kingdom of God, when seen in the lives of its members, cannot fail to influence those brought up in a worldly and un-Christian atmosphere. The Materialist and Socialist, referring to the man of Christian ideals, says: "He put up a good show, but his policy won't work. It's too milk-and-waterish for this generation, and of course the religious idea is scotched. The new age is going to be purely material." To this the owner of the "Great Possessions," who has been newly brought under the influence of the Kingdom of God, replies: "I am not a very religious woman myself, but I have read history, and we have got Germany as the modern object-lesson. We have seen to what the worship of pure materialism has brought her" (chap. 14). Once people have partially got over their madness, the ideal of the Kingdom of God is exercising its influence. People are beginning to see that the perpetual struggle to get the better of somebody, whether an individual or a nation, is essentially barbaric. In a recent play—"The Right to Strike"—a play deservedly well received, the futility of the use of brute force and retaliation is forcibly expressed. Its lesson is gathered from words of two of the leading characters:

A.—"Have we not all rather forgotten that we are the children of God? We have been so busy fighting each other to kill and for our own selfish ends. . . . What has been the good of it all?"

B.—"Is there not something bigger and better behind it all, if we could only find it?"

A.—" Who is to show us ? "
B.—" Was it not shown us in Galilee, two thousand years ago ? "

When the Elder Brother and Teacher of the race is listened to in the industrial ranks, wealth will be used not for profit or making more wealth, but for service, and what is co-operatively produced will be co-operatively shared ; and the workman will give a good day's work for a good day's wage. Such will be the influence of the Kingdom of God when it is acknowledged in the industrial department of life. And similar results will follow in other departments. One more illustration :

Abroad there is the problem of the conversion and government of the coloured nations and the maintenance of peace among the nations.

Are the nations with whom the Christian Church is associated in the minds of the heathen, ruled by love or by force ? Is the negro, for example, not very apt to regard the Christian religion as a fraud because of the Christian's use of force ? He is not allowed to walk on the same pavement with a white Christian, nor travel in the same railway compartment. What is treatment of that kind likely to lead to ? To what we are seeing happening in India, Africa and America to-day—race-war. In America, the land that is called " the home of the brave and free," and which, in its constitution, proclaims the equality of all men and their right to self-government, race-riots have been of frequent occurrence. And no wonder. In Chicago, for example, the " blacks " have been treated as an unholy race, kept in a certain part of the city as in a compound—the descendants of those people who

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